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ABSTRACT

Chronicling a year-long project to study fantasy literature, this book presents essays, teaching units, student writing models, and "jack tales." The project chronicled in the book consisted of a 4-week intensive study program for librarians and teachers of grades 2 through 7 throughout the Appalachian region, followed up by two more meetings during the following school year. "Connections," the first chapter of the book, presents essays and student products which illustrate the bond between fantasy and reality, including "Of Quests and Fantasy" (Jane Louise Curry), and "Truth on a Slant: The Psychic History of the Gender Wars in the Jenna Novels of Jane Yolen" (Robert J. Higgs). "Themes," the second chapter of the book, is comprised of brief essays and student products on the three most recurring themes--friendship, the hero, and "memento mori." "Approaches," the third chapter, represents the classroom application of the philosophical and literary ideas examined in the first two chapters, including "Alice and the Reader: Duo in Wonderland" (Ronald K. Giles), "Creative Dramatics with Third-Graders: Turning Narrative into Drama Using 'The Wind in the Willows'" (Robbin Sharpe Nuckolls), and "An Approach to 'The Hobbit'" (Jo Ann Hess). "Reflections," the fourth chapter, presents the reflections of participants, including "Lifelong Returns from the Fantasy Institute" (Earlene Misener) and descriptive information about the "Fantasy Fair" that concluded the year-long project. Appendixes list participants, staff, and mentors. Lists of 114 books, 189 articles, and 42 reference materials on fantasy literature are attached. (RS)

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Journey Through Fantasy Literature

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Journey
Fantasy

Through Literature

A resource guide for teachers

Volume II

Roberta T. Herrin, Editor
Sarah K. Davis, Associate Editor

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And finally, we are indebted to Jane Louise Curry for her participation in the 1991 Fantasy Fair and her interest in Ben Creek Grade School in Wharncliffe, West Virginia. Upon learning that Ben Creek School had no library, Curry donated several boxes of books.

PREFACE

On June 10, 1990, forty-five adults arrived on the campus of East Tennessee State University ready to embark on a Journey Through Fantasy Literature. In the weeks to follow, they would go with Alice down the rabbit hole into Wonderland; venture with Ratty and Mole into the Wild Wood; follow Lucy, Edmund, Susan and Peter from the land of Spare Oom into Narnia; travel with Bilbo Baggins over the Misty Mountains; and go with Charlotte and Wilbur to a county fair. Their journey would also take them down the Mississippi River with Huck Finn, into the mystic world of William Blake, to Walden with Thoreau, and on a quest with Sir Gawain to keep his bargain with the Green Knight.

Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, this venture brought together librarians and teachers of grades two through seven throughout the Appalachian region: South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia. One state outside the region—Arkansas—was represented by a single individual whose participation showed us the value of gathering teachers together from different areas to read, to study, to discuss, and to build networks.

For four weeks, June 11-July 6, 1990, these participants engaged in intensive study of five classic children's fantasy novels: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*; *The Wind in the Willows*; *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*; *The Hobbit*; and *Charlotte's Web*. One of the main objectives of the enterprise was to demonstrate that significant philosophical themes and motifs so often identified in the adult canon of literature are also present in children's fantasy literature—themes such as friendship, the hero, the quest, sacrifice, *memento mori*, freedom, identity, and self. We wished to emphasize that "all literature connects," but more specifically, that children's fantasy and adult classics connect. To achieve this objective, participants studied adult companion pieces: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, E. B. White's *Essays*, and Joseph Campbell's *The Power of Myth*, which was the core text of the institute.

This publication, *Journey Through Fantasy Literature: A Resource Guide for Teachers*, Volume 2, represents the results of this experiment in pairing children's and adult literature. The work of institute faculty, participants, and their students is divided into four chapters: "Connections," "Themes," "Approaches," and "Reflections."

"Connections," Chapter 1, represents the heart of the institute and most specifically addresses its major objectives. These essays and student products illustrate the bond between fantasy and reality and show how we use fantasy to search for "explanations of the riddles of our lives," to quote Natalie Babbitt. These essays also illustrate that fantasy often articulates more successfully than does realism the serious "riddles" of human existence.

"Themes," Chapter 2, is comprised of essays and student products on the three most recurring themes—friendship, the hero, and *memento mori*. The surprising thing about this chapter is its strong emphasis on battle and death—even in the pieces which stress friendship. One is left to conclude that children's fantasy mirrors the traditional theme underlying most classic adult literature—the struggle to understand our mortality.

"Approaches," Chapter 3, was born out of the follow-up effort. More specifically, "Approaches" represents the classroom application of the philosophical and literary ideas examined in chapters 1 and 2. During the 1990-91 school year, participants were asked to take the institute goals and ideas back to their classrooms for a year-long study of fantasy literature. Guided by mentors, they worked in small cluster groups, which met once in the fall of 1990 and once in the spring of 1991. At these meetings, mentors and participants continued the emphasis on connections and themes. Additionally, they generated articles for the monthly newsletter *Road to Wonderful*. The result is Chapter 3, comprised of the many creative efforts of teachers and their students.

No journey is complete without the customary reflection on its beginning, its highlights, its humorous moments, its difficulties, its end, and most of all, its effect on the traveler. "Reflections," Chapter 4, affords us that review. Like Bilbo and Wilbur and Mole and Lucy and Alice, the participants ended their four-week journey somewhat changed. From the humorous class song to the serious observations regarding students' reading, this chapter demonstrates the effect on participants and their students. Several participants comment that the four-week journey was a life-changing experience.

Completing this volume is an appendix which lists participants, staff, and mentors, and provides substantive bibliographies. Not intended to be complete, the bibliographies include only the books, articles, and reference materials most central to fantasy literature. It is our hope that this resource guide, with its essays, poetry, short fiction, drama, teaching ideas, and bibliographies, will encourage adults and children to journey through fantasy literature and aid them in their quest.

RTH

I

CONNECTIONS

That which is the journey, that which is the goal, is the fulfillment of something that never was on earth before—namely your own potentiality.

—Campbell, *The Power of Myth*

In an essay called "The Roots of Fantasy," Natalie Babbitt argues that "All fantasy is rooted somewhere very deep in reality. It is the voice of our reachings-out for explanations of the riddles of our lives, and for enrichment of their texture" (*Bulletin of the Children's Literature Association*, Spring 1986). In both subtle and obvious ways, the entire Journey Through Fantasy Literature is based on Babbitt's premise. The emphasis on connections throughout the institute asks participants and lecturers to ignore the usual barriers between fantasy and reality, between children's and adult literature, and to "reach out" or search for explanations and enrichment.

The search or quest is the subject of essays by fantasy authors Jane Louise Curry and Jane Yolen. "Of Quests and Fantasy," by Curry, tells how the study of Arthurian romance sent her on a quest through the past and led her to create a "mythical history of the American landscape," rooted in reality. "Turtles All the Way Down," by Yolen, also echoes Babbitt's premise that fantasy must first "connect" with reality. "Look hard at the real world," says Yolen, "and then look slightly askance. That is how you make . . . fantasy."

Jack Higgs's study of Yolen's companion fantasy novels—*Sister Light, Sister Dark* and *White Jenna*—argues that fantasy holds the kernel of truth which history alone cannot expose. But Higgs takes the connection one step further to explore what Babbitt calls "our reachings-out for explanations for the riddles of our lives." Higgs addresses the riddle of gender myths and wars throughout history, and ends with the question of whether we are doomed to repeat them.

Gender wars and mythical truths may seem to be hard "riddles" for children's fantasies such as *The Wind in the Willows* and *Charlotte's Web*. But this is exactly the point which the institute hopes to make. If exposed to these rich, classic fantasies—instead of basal readers—children come to know that Mole and Rat and Toad, in *The Wind in the Willows*, really are "ourselves in fur," searching for answers to the age-old riddles of human existence. When these children become adolescents, they will be better able to appreciate Huck's dilemma in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. As Allison Ensor points out in his essay "Journey to Freedom and Maturity," both Toad and Huck struggle mightily with the conflict between their desires and their social consciences—a struggle as old as conscience itself.

If a child can see in *Charlotte's Web* the reality of his and all mankind's mortality, then that child will probably continue to search for "explanations of the riddles" of his life. As an adult, his search may lead him to realistic books, and he may happen upon Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*, the subject of John Lang's essay, "All the Bright Magic of a Fairy Tale." That adult reader will be able to appreciate, as does Lang, Morrison's skillful fusion of realism with myth, fantasy, and folklore. The individual in whom such connections have been nurtured will, as Lang points out, be able to "celebrate life's possibilities" amid its defeats.

RTH

Comments from Participants

"The world of fantasy literature is endless. This institute has opened doors to exciting adventures, and now our responsibility as teachers is to give students the keys to unlock the doors to the wonderful fantasy books that await them."

—DeAnn Setler

"Journey Through Fantasy Literature is a wonderful opportunity for teachers to learn about fantasy and how it connects to all aspects of life. After my second-graders read *Charlotte's Web*, they begged to read more fantasy books."

—Robbin Sharpe Nuckolls

"In so many small ways I have made connections because of what I learned in the institute. . . . I am a better teacher and person because of my experience."

—Paula Morrow

Of Quests and Fantasy

by

Jane Louise Curry

(The following lecture was delivered to an adult audience of teachers at the Fantasy Fair on May 9, 1991, on the East Tennessee State University campus.)

I want to talk about quests today—quests of all different sorts. To begin with, you are sending your students off in quest of their creative selves. The use of imaginative literature as a path to that creativity is a happy echo of an experience which many other children have only happened upon by chance. I fell into the writing of fantasy because I happened upon King Arthur, and in that I am not alone. For two hundred years or more, children whose imaginations were nourished by the Arthurian legends have been growing up to become writers and artists and retellers and reshapers of the tales of King Arthur in poetry, fiction and drama; ballet and opera; painting, films and comic books; and computer games. I met the legends in fourth grade, in an old abridged version of Tennyson's *The Idylls of the King*, when as a reward for who-knows-what I was allowed to pick a book from the glass-fronted Advanced Reading case just outside the principal's door.

The poet Robert Southey, as a child in the latter eighteenth century, met them in "a wretched, imperfect copy," as he later called it. As an adult he edited the first facsimile of Caxton's edition of Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*. When, in the early 1820s, Tennyson was twelve or so, his father's library included a hack edition of Malory which was very likely young Alfred's introduction to the tales. By mid-century, with *The Idylls of the King*, he had restored the popularity of the tales, which had come to be dismissed by educated readers as irrelevant in the bustling modern world. Once revived, interest in the Arthurian tales and themes flourished, and it continues today as strong as ever. Virtually every year since *The Idylls of the King* there have been new retellings, not only for children, but for adults as well.

Joseph Campbell, in one of his lectures on the transformations of myth through time, speaks of the Arthurian legends as "the embodiment of the Western way" because in the quest of the Holy Grail the Celtic-North European hero tradition is combined with the (very much opposed, in some ways) Eastern Christian ideal with its emphasis on community. He tells about, in the French and German versions, the appearance of the Grail at Arthur's Court at a great banquet when Arthur refuses to allow anyone to eat

Jane Louise Curry wrote her first children's book *Down From the Lonely Mountain* in 1965. Since then she has produced more than thirty titles, many of which are fantasies. A blending or fusing of the past and present is Curry's hallmark. Her most recent book *What The Dickens!* was published by Macmillan in October 1991.

until the company has had an adventure. Angelic messengers appear, bearing the veiled Holy Grail before the company, and every one of the knights is transfixed, and lifted up in rapture. When the messengers have withdrawn the vision of the Holy Grail, Gawain stands up and proposes that they go on a quest, each one, to see the Grail unveiled—to see the Ultimate. Campbell quotes, "They agreed that all would go on this quest, but they thought it would be a disgrace . . . to go forth in a group, so each entered the forest at a point he himself had chosen, where it was darkest, and where there was no path" (211).

Campbell contrasts this with the Oriental tradition, in which your guru already knows the path and where you are upon it, and where you must head for. But for Arthur's knights there is no path. Campbell says, "that which is the journey, that which is the goal, is the fulfillment of something that never was on the earth before—namely, your own potentiality" (212), which is the Westernness that he sees in the legends. But there has always been more, I believe, than the quest for self-fulfillment at the root of the power that the Arthurian tales still have over the Western imagination. A twenty-eight-year-old graduate student has written that the tradition's deepest meaning for him is that "King Arthur is a mighty dream and vision, one that still convinces many that Right makes Might and not the other way around, and that it is right to show courtesy and honor to every person until they prove that they do not deserve it, and it is better to fight injustice and oppression than merely to accept it" (Lambides 316). This idealistic hope for the healing of society perhaps moves the child in us more than the adult, who is dismayed by knowledge of the tragedy that is to befall the Round Table, and by the flaws in the knights who seek perfection.

Children's versions of the tales proliferated in the later nineteenth century in spite of Mark Twain's objection in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* that Arthurian chivalry was "the righteous arrogance of power." In America, Arthur's popularity led in 1893 to the founding by a Congregational minister of the Order of the Knights of King Arthur for boys. The purpose of this very popular youth organization was to

> bring back to the world, and especially to its youth, the spirit of chivalry, courtesy, deference to womanhood, recognition of the *noblesse oblige,* and Christian daring, an ideal of the kingdom of knightliness which King Arthur promised he would bring back when he returns from Avalon. (William Byron Forbush, qtd. in Curry, "Children's Reading" 154)

The order encouraged hero worship though "the reading together of heroic books" and competition for "the sacred honor of the 'Siege Perilous' for athletic, scholarly, or self-sacrificing attainments" (William Byron Forbush, qtd. in Curry, "Children's Reading" 154). Similarly, the Boy Scout was first conceived as a Knight Errant, and the first edition of Lord Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys* (1908) introduced the "Knight's Code," rules ostensibly established by King Arthur himself which inspired innumerable latter-day quests and good deeds.

This was a strongly socializing use of fantasy, not concerned, as you are, with opening up the imagination but with channeling imaginative energies in socially useful and respectable directions. Thanks, however, to the children who happily took the bait—and in spite of their elders' all too evident and earnest didactic motives—King Arthur is still alive.

However, when I came to write my own Arthurian story, *The Sleepers*—and as a student of medieval English literature who had done a fair amount of work on the Arthurian romances, it was inevitable that I would try it—I felt rather nervous and constrained simply because I was having fun with material I respected so much.

But at the other extreme, I am not one of those who, like Ursula Le Guin, whom I admire immensely, can fashion rich fantasy worlds out of whole cloth. I seem to need one foot firmly planted either in traditional lore or in the real world. Nevertheless, as Campbell remarked about the Knight Errant in an interview in 1987,

> Whenever a knight tried to follow a path made by someone else, he went altogether astray. Where there is a way or a path it is someone else's footsteps. Each of us has to find his own way, and this is what gives our Occidental world its initiative and creative qualities. The images that mean something to you, you'll find in your dreams, in your visions, in your actions. (qtd. in Lambides 321)

And so though I could neither follow Arthur deeper into retelling Arthurian tales or invent new worlds, what I wanted to write, I decided—without any very deep understanding of my motives—were my own magical stories set in America that drew on the lore, myths and legends of both the New World and the Old.

But here in America we have no traditions of fairies or elves or wizards. The early settlers brought only a belief in witches, and left other "superstitions" behind. But the key to the way into my new "mythical history" was an account from Elizabethan Wales which I had run across in my reading. Supposedly, one night near Nant y Ffrith, farmers had seen a great company of thousands on horseback and foot sweep down the Vale and disappear into the mist. Local tradition—connected with a similar report—had it that they were the Fair Folk, leaving Britain because it was no longer a kingdom of magic and mystery—leaving to sail out across the sea to the Summer Isles. Those old stories led me to one of those "What if?" illuminations familiar to storytellers. What if, I thought, this flotilla of coracles—the traditional hide-covered boats—went astray in a storm or in the mist and landed instead on the eastern coast of North America?

I could . . . I could even bring them inland to the western Pennsylvania of my parents' farm, a landscape I knew by heart. The farm at that time had for several years been surrounded by strip mining for coal, and the tragedy of green hills and deep woods being gouged and scarred might provide a center for a plot. (Those were the days before coal operators were required to restore the land to something like its old shape.) Things began to come together. In *Beneath the Hill*, my first imaginative story, the hill was to become not simply a re-named Laurel Ridge but, unknown to its present-day inhabitants, the home of deep caverns which had been the site of an ancient mountain kingdom. This was Nutaỹe, one of the chief places of the realm of Abáloc.

Beneath the Hill was essentially an adventure, with no particular development in the characters, which began as a family story but then introduced elves—the Fair Folk—into the present-day world. Moving westward through the long-ago wilderness, they had come upon the marvelous caverns and made their home there. At the story's end, they float down the Ohio River, bound for the Mississippi, the Gulf, and a new venture in quest of the Summer Isles.

I knew there were more stories of Abáloc to come, but it soon became clear that before I could go further the Fair Folk's own tale demanded to be told. I learned early on to give in to such demands even if they ran counter to carefully laid plans, for my imagination always runs more lightly on paths that discover themselves than on walkways I have made with carefully fitted paving stones. Therefore, in 1968, once I had finished my doctoral dissertation on Middle English lyric poetry, I began *The Change-Child,* itself the tale of a quest.

The Change-Child is set in early seventeenth-century Wales, its heroine Eilian an outsider, a crippled girl. The tale follows her inner growth, the stripping away of her resentments and illusions, her regaining of clear sight, and her reintegration into her own family and her own place and time. Accused of being a changeling left by fairies in place of a stolen healthy child, she longs for a life among the Fair Folk, but comes to accept her human self when she must choose whether to join the great company of elves who set forth across the sea for the Summer Isles.

The Change-Child was followed a year later by *The Daybreakers,* an adventure involving less complex characters, but new complexities of time travel by way of "time-slip." It is the first of four related tales set in Appalachia, and in each of the four I found the time-slip the perfect device to allow me to keep one foot firmly fixed in the present. Looking back, I can see that I was adventuring my way into fantasy Ariadne-style, keeping hold of a thread tied fast in the daylight world. It was to be years before I knew Abáloc well enough to venture there without the framework of a present-day setting.

During the years from *The Daybreakers* to the last (to date) tale of Abáloc, I was inventing Abáloc's—Appalachia's—past, building upon old lore gleaned from European tradition, readings on pre-Columbian civilizations, our own folklore, geological and archaeological studies, and native American mythology. There was so much that was fascinating to me that in the early books I needed that one story-foot in the present simply to keep me from being overwhelmed by the increasing richness of that invented past.

In *Over the Sea's Edge* in 1971 and *The Watchers* in 1975, I followed two discontented boys, once again outsiders, deeper than ever into that past. Self-discovery in the course of venturing into the unknown does seem to be a recurring theme in my fantasy novels, but I would hazard a guess that in one sense or another the same is true of most fantasy novels. In *The Birdstones,* the last of the first four tales, I went back to the school-story form of *The Daybreakers,* in which the whole fifth-grade class act together as protagonists. It was a return to lighter adventure, almost as if I needed to take a deep breath before plunging into *The Wolves of Aam* and *Shadow Dancers.*

As my mythical history of the American landscape grew more detailed and more sweeping, I began to learn what treasures, all too often unnoticed, we have underfoot in lore and in fact. If I began with a whimsical association between the name of Arthurian Avalon—its Breton form of *"Aballach"*—and Appalachia, in looking deep into the geological past when all that existed of North America were great islands in the risen sea, I discovered that I was not the first to have such fancies. The name geologists give to the highland island which became our Appalachian mountain range was Antillia, from the early European legends of the fabulous land of Antillia across the western seas. I learned too about the Mound Builders, a civilization that once flourished in the southeastern part of our continent, but which most people living now within their borders have never heard of. Their cities were scattered along the Ohio and Mississippi and south and eastward from those rivers. The mounds and earthworks that survive, those at Chillicothe and Marietta in Ohio and many other places, include not only burial mounds, but the sites of ritual and other structures associated with large communities. One large "city," a settlement including some fifty mounds and ten large earthworks (of which only three mounds survive), stretched along the Kanawha River near present-day Charleston, W.Va. It figures in one of the Abáloc tales, as does Tennessee's ancient Old Stone Fort.

You may imagine my excitement when I came upon references to early American reports of encounters with "Welsh Indians," fair- or red-haired, blue-eyed Indians who supposedly spoke a dialect which echoed the Welsh language. The explanation most commonly put forward in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by believers in the old stories was that these folk were the descendants of the survivors of the legendary voyage of discovery led in the twelfth century by Prince Madoc of Wales. In this century the D.A.R. in Mobile, Ala., accepted the legend as history, setting up a state historical marker claiming the entrance to Mobile Bay as his landing place. Historians may or may not agree, but for me that was beside the point. My own discovery of two books about Madoc (one a long and tiresome but voluminously footnoted poem by that same Robert Southey who edited Malory) helped to shift my imagination into high gear.

There were other sorts of enjoyment as well. I could put my fascination with maps and the past of our landscapes to good use, and learn about real prehistoric creatures as interesting or alarming as any in legend: long-extinct tiny horses that once ran wild in great herds across the Southeast, great woolly mammoths, and dire wolves, huge, fearsome killing machines as large as any pony. I might even find a way to draw in creatures from folklore such as Sasquatch—better known as Bigfoot.

But I wanted something more than adventure-decorated-with-lore. At the time I was planning the first Abáloc story, *Beneath the Hill,* I was teaching a freshman literature seminar at Stanford on "The Hero: Problems in Action and Commitment," and was struck by how strong an appeal tales of quests and tests and rites of passage had for university students. The discussion of a paper on Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* was among the liveliest, and one of the best papers was a study of "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight."

Quests have the same strong appeal to children, too. Consider the many fairytale characters who go off in search of their fortunes, or Stuart Little faring out on his quest, Bilbo setting out to find adventure, the Mouse and his child seeking to become self-winding, or simply the young speaker in Robert Louis Stevenson's "Travel," who would "like to rise and go / Where the golden apples grow;— / Where below another sky / Parrot islands anchored lie" (16).

There are quests for magical objects which will solve some problem; for lost parents or one's own true identity; for stolen treasures; for magical elixirs; for remembered, hidden, undiscovered or enchanted places; for the Wise Man who has all answers; or simply quests for the sake of the wisdom that comes from the journeying. In *The Lord of the Rings* you have each of the Companions with a different motive in the quest though they strive together to save Middle-earth from Sauron. In John Gardner's adult fantasy novel, *In the Suicide Mountains*, the oddly assorted traveling companions who have set out in search of death find themselves instead.

On some level, that is at least in part what all of the quests worth remembering are about: finding oneself. The seeker who goes where there is no path may be as Campbell says, the Western individualist ideal, but paths can lead to worthwhile destinations, too. Dorothy follows the Yellow Brick Road in her search for the Emerald City and the Wizard of Oz, and it, too, leads through dangers to enlightenment: the realization that for her there is no place like home. The fantasy world has taught Dorothy a new way of seeing the everyday world. The "road to wonderful" can be either a faint forest track or a road paved with yellow bricks.

Many a quest follows a classical pattern that appears in many cultures, from the most primitive to our own: a ritual initiation into maturity. The first stage in such a quest is one of separation from the everyday world, and in the course of the initiation/adventure there is a transition, a sort of "purification" of the old self: a symbolic death and rebirth, an opening up to change. After that can come the incorporation or re-integration into the social group. That can mean into one's own family, or into something broader—devoting oneself to supporting a larger group's goals or welfare, perhaps, supporting an environmental or social cause.

For me, reading about Native American cultures added new dimensions to my conception of the quests that might be played out on an ancient North American landscape. In reading of the Crow and Cheyenne and Sioux, I learned that the stage of transition and purification for a young person undergoing initiation into adulthood was itself seen as a quest. According to the Sioux teachers, all things in the universe know of harmony with every other living thing, and know how to "give away"—to relate—to every other living thing. Only humankind does not. We share spirit and life with all other things, but only man is a determiner. It is our determining spirit that has to be made whole through learning about our harmony with creation. To do so we must learn to seek and to perceive. To go on a "vision quest" is to begin that search: to discover ourselves, to learn how to see ourselves and how to find our relationship with the world. Each of us, the Sioux teach, is born with a certain mindset. We may view the world either through introspection or, if we are wise, through wisdom; if we are innocent, we view the world as new and exciting; or we learn through illumination, either divine or through teachers. Harmony comes from learning to understand all four ways of viewing the world, of seeing how others see it. When we can leave ourselves behind enough to step into those others' shoes and see through those others' eyes, then we can truly know where we are standing ourselves (Storm 7).

From writings about Hopi tradition and beliefs I learned of their creation myth, and found in it an underlying theme and a structure of sorts for my ancient New World. In Hopi belief there are four created worlds. In the first World, Spider Woman makes Men from four different colors of clay—yellow and red, black and white—and these folk live a very simple life, in harmony with each other and animals and the whole earth. But then, gradually, they lose that harmony. The Talker and Katoya the Snake convince them that their differences are significant, and lead them into suspicion and hostility. Those few who still follow the laws of Creation are led by a cloud and a star which are visible only to the "third eye" to find shelter underground among the Ant People as the First World is destroyed by fire (Waters 6-14).

In the Second World into which they emerge, the harmony between people and animals no longer exists. Even so, humankind gets along fairly well at first. They develop handicrafts, make homes, build villages, and begin to want more things. They barter, they store, and they sing praises of things rather than of the Creator. They quarrel and make wars. Once again the Ant People must shelter the good folk (the Hopi) as this spoiled world is destroyed by ice (Waters 14-16).

In the Third World once again people multiply. They build cities and create countries and great civilizations. Once again many are bound up in their material concerns and have no time to sing the Creator's praises, and so destruction by water sweeps across the world. This time the good folk, on their emergence from the sheltering earth, must search out a Fourth World for themselves. The dwelling place they find is less beautiful and less easy than the others, but hard work does not keep everyone from evil ways, and so for their protection the good folk of the Fourth World are commanded to follow a great and repeated circle of migration around the land from one coast to another. The Hopi believe that their ancestors truly made such great migrations around this huge land. They were commanded to live life as a quest for harmony and freedom from enslavement to things. Once they had fulfilled the number of migrations they were commanded to make, they came at last to Oraibi on the Third Mesa (Waters 17-122).

A number of these Hopi themes surfaced in my sketch of the long history of my Westerworld. In my First World all the lands were one, as in early geological time, and in the north of that land lay Thamor, home of the Aldar, the tall immortals we call elves. The forest lands that were ancestor to the southeastern United States were the kingdom of the Tiddi, a very small folk who were both consummate craftsmen and children of nature. The Aldar celebrate the harmony of the universe, the balance of life which all of them understand, with the Great Dance, performed with twelve "skystones" representing the sun, moon, planets, and pole star. It is an echo of the true universal Dance, signifying to the Creator that His Creation is still one whole, and that it is valued by its creatures. In time Men appear and flourish, but dissension is sown among them and between them and the other folk by Katóa, a serpent clearly derived from the Hopi Katoya.

The Worldstone which represents earth in the Great Dance is shattered, and the First World ends in earthquake and volcanic eruption. The Aldar and the survivors among the mortals people the Second World. I have written no stories—yet—of the first two worlds, but the tales of *The Wolves of Aam* and *Shadow Dancers* are set in the latter part of the Third World. In that time there are still elves, though they are rarely seen. The Tiddi, a migratory folk, discover deep, beautiful caverns (those known in the earlier *Beneath the Hill* by the latter name Nutaỹe) and are enchanted by them. Half of the Tiddi become so immersed in the beauty of the stonework there that they stay on when others leave to continue their migration.

To give you some idea of how detailed a game I made of this background planning, much of which is never referred to in the stories, I mapped the yearly migrations in which the Tiddi go from Eem to Tha to Aye, to Saan, to Min, to Aam and to Eem, and worked out the number of days to each. I designed star maps that saw our skies with new eyes and invented a cosmology to fit them, with both Aldar and Tiddi names for planets and constellations.

You could, in fact, say that I took notes and made the time charts and compiled the genealogies and cosmologies and taped the maps to my walls and my patio window doors in a quest of my own. I was using fantasy as you want children to use it, as a new way to see and to explore life in the real world and on the real landscape. I was at the time living a rootless life and very much wanting to find **my** place. In this way I came to know the real landscape as well as its mythical past.

So I had the lore—and stories began to pop up here and there throughout the history of this Westerworld.

Quests are important to the Abáloc stories. In *Over the Sea's Edge* the symbol of the questing spirit is a winged figure within a circle. These images of freedom and containment are in constant tension. For children this is an ever-present tension: to have their own way, to go their own way, but still to be assured of safety and belonging. That tension is one reason why the introduction to fantasy and the life of the imagination can be so liberating. We can face Charlotte's death or understand the speech of animals or slay a dragon or visit the king who lives on Asteroid 325, and still go home to supper.

Or not, as the case may be. In *Over the Sea's Edge* Dave Reese never goes home to supper. Or does he? The story grew out of my fascination with Dylan Thomas's poem "A Conversation of Prayer" in which the answers to two persons' prayers get crossed. In my tale the dreams of two boys living in different times touch and cross. Dave Reese, who lives in Marietta, Ohio, awakens to find himself in twelfth-century Wales in the place of Dewi Rhys who desperately wants to escape his dangerous life and become a scholar. Dave, in Marietta, hates school and longs for nothing but adventure. Somehow, perhaps through the talisman of the winged figure, each awakes in the other's place. Dave comes, as he begins to forget his old self and his old life, to understand that "you have a center all your own . . . but the rest of what you are comes from touching what's around you—people and places, even things. Maybe the two of us have only switched centers, and after a bit we'll grow fast into where we are, and not remember at all." He meets Dewi in dreams, but the exchange is real, and he goes questing with Prince Madoc in fact, and returns to America in the ship *Gwennan Gorn*. Both he and Dewi find their true selves.

As for Madoc's quest, the old hermit Gruffyt says, "His dreams are set in no new world. . . . He dreams of winning fame and wealth, and with them power. He is like the child who cries, 'I will show them!'" Madoc's quest is a perverted one, and what happens to him in the course of the story is central, too. In America they find a magnificent land which he sees only as a setting for plunder, so he has far to go.

For me, reading the early explorers on the America they found was a fascinating, even eerie experience. It was strangely moving to realize—though the bones of the land were the same—how deeply different it was when our familiar hills and valleys were covered by virgin forest. It was almost as strange, in reading archaeology, to rebuild in imagination the wooden cities Madoc would have seen:

> Two days later, at sunset, Coala brought them to a thinly wooded hillside and showed them a great city in the valley below. . . . Gleaming white and gold in the sun, it bewildered and astonished them. . . . It sprawled across the river plain: broad streets lined with steep-roofed detached houses, large and small, radiating from a tall, flat-topped mound in the city's center, an artificial hill crowned by a golden temple. (*Over* 96)

My Tushcloshán stands where Tuscaloosa stands today. As for Tennessee and Johnson City—

> Traveling east into hilly country, northeast through a long, broad valley, they came after some days into a high country of river, rising bluffs, waterfall, and mountain ridge. The forest was cool and quiet, more light and open than the dank lowland jungles. Great magnolias, slippery elms, and silver bell and liquidambar trees climbed the hillsides; ferns and yellow violets grew in the hollows and on the slopes among the mountain laurels and camellias. . . . Further upstream along the river that was their guide, the Companions found a ledge—two feet wide in some places and at no point more than five—which climbed the high, narrow bluff around whose foot the river bent as it came down from the waterfall beyond. The file of men went up between two great rocks onto the high arm of land and made camp with Cibotlán stretching away at their feet.
>
> Such a land and so empty! The men marveled. (*Over* 97-8)

And that is, as you may know, the view from Lookout Mountain, at Chattanooga. They travel on north, but unfortunately I cannot now find the map on which I followed their journey, and in the intervening years my memory of the path we chose has faded. Their way may well have led them through Johnson City if it was the Nolichuckey River they followed.

In the end, as I have said, both boys are rooted firmly in their new selves, and though it is through magic that each is given the chance to achieve the self he knew he could be, our own belief in that possibility—of achieving what we hope is our truest self—is crucial to living fully. Children without dreams do not grow. They only grow older. For that matter, adults without dreams neither grow nor change. The "new" Dave in Marietta, who had been Dewi, might not yet be out of danger of growing up to be a blinkered dry-as-dust scholar-professor but, out one day at the river's edge with his small cousin Alice, he looks upstream toward the tree-clad island hovering there. She asks,

> "Could we go there?" There was wonder in the question. I don't see why not," he said slowly, and then more firmly. "I don't see why not. Tomorrow. We'll go tomorrow. . . . And some day," he said softly like a promise to himself, "some day I am going to sail down through the lock and down to the Mississippi and the sea." (*Over* 181)

In *The Watchers* Ray Siler, another outsider, is sent on his journey of discovery of himself against his will. He is sent from up in the Panhandle of West Virginia down to relatives in Twilly's Green, in the mountains, not far from Beckley. All he can think of is getting money enough to get home, and for the sake of money he comes close to betraying the families in the hollow, and that betrayal is an echo of one made by his counterpart, Ruan, eight hundred years earlier, that has to do with the shrine of Katóa. Figures from Ruan's time, led by Queen Tekla, are searching for that shrine. She, like Arbie Moar in the present, is a seeker after power over others, but it is Ray who is in danger of awakening Katóa's dark spirit.

Toward the story's end, as Ray is drawn into the warmth of the family in the hollow, Uncle Penn Dreego takes him to "Up Top" on the mountain above the hollow, and shows him where they and their forebears lived before they were obliged to half-join the modern world:

> From the front door of the old [Mattick] house, a wide, stone-paved path led southward down an avenue of ancient tuliptrees. Seen from the ragged garden, they towered unbelievably tall, their new leaves glossy in the western sun and the blossoms all ablaze; but once upon the road itself, under that great whispering vault of branches pillared by trunks twenty and more feet around, the old man and the boy walked in a deep and lovely gloom. And when they came to the bottom of the valley and the green arched way tipped upward, Ray saw the Gare at its far end.
>
> It was a castle, perched among the dark and twisted Carolina hemlocks on the high valley's southern rim. (*Watchers* 127)

(That ruined castle has its place in the lore of Abáloc, but its story has not been written.) Ray realizes at last that in finding a history, ages-old traditions, and extended family, he has found himself, and toward the end of *The Watchers* he joins the family in fighting for the survival of Twilly's Green. In the conclusion,

> Ray couldn't say a word. He knew he was too big to do such a thing, but here it didn't seem to matter: he slipped his hand into his uncle's as they walked along. He could not have been happier if he had been Ruan, come home at last after twice eight hundred years. (*Watchers* 235)

Reluctant and resisting all the way, he has "come home" by learning to see through others' eyes.

In *The Wolves of Aam* (1981) for the first time I felt that my grasp of my mythical history was firm enough and detailed enough for me to risk not keeping that one storytelling foot in the present day. I took the leap with both feet. Now, I have never explained this before, either in writing or to an audience, but the world of Astarlind and the Great Ice of the tale is not another world, but this one. It is eastern North America in about 15,000 B.C., at the end of the "Wisconsin" period of glaciation. At that time the ice cap extended almost as far south as the Ohio River. The Ohio ran in a northeasterly direction for most of its length. Rivers ran in different directions; mountains and valleys were different in shape. Even without my tinkering, the landscape would have made an exciting setting, and the story's action makes long sweeps across it.

In the tale, the wolves of Aam were great golden beasts—and there are still golden wolves. Lek, like Madoc after him, is on a quest to regain his rightful place in his old world. Runner and Fith and Tiddi (folk about the size of the little bushmen of the African Kalahari Desert); the girl Cat is part Tiddi and part mystery; there is Hlik, the talking raven; and the Dread Ones are the great dire wolves I spoke of earlier. The giant Icelings are the ancestors of the Sasquatch—though you would not know it from the cover of the book, which does not show them as hairy enough. There are goblins called the Rokharruk, and a few of the elvish folk, as well as a wizard or two.

Aam itself just happens to be in Tennessee, north of Tullahoma with its center at the place known as Old Stone Fort outside of Manchester on the Duck River. "The Barrens" north of Aam are the present-day Barrens and further north (in Cannon County) are the Wrinkled Hills which Runner and Fith and Cat must cross. Beyond, they come to the Marshrill, which is the ancestor of the Cumberland River. The Broken Hills are a steeper, sharper version of the hills northeast of Gallatin, mostly in Macon County. Lek, Runner, Fith, Cat, the wolves and the Icelings are joined in a quest to recover a missing skystone. By the end of *Shadow Dancers,* the sequel to *The Wolves of Aam,* Runner has found his birthplace and his true name in the caverns of Nagharot and, with the exception of Cat, the others also regain something of what they have lost. Lek, his quest accomplished, may not yet know where he is going, but Cat may. She says,

> "I have a dream place. It may be only a wishing-dream and not a foreknowing, but I do not think so. As we came north along the Blues, I dreamed one night that we passed my dream place that very day, but could not see it for the trees: a tall mountain—once a fire mountain, by its shape—tucked between ridges. Up top, there is a wide, round valley tilted like a cup to catch the Sun. A place to make an end to wandering. Liloes grow there, and persimmons and . . . and, oh, any seed that touches the ground!"
>
> "And you all alone there?" Fith was as astonished as Arl. They had never before heard so many words in a row from Cat. . . .
>
> "Alone? Oh, no." Cat's eyes flew open. "I may not be a Tiddi, but I could not bear to be alone."
>
> An odd note to her protest, and the flush that rose with it to her cheeks, brought sharp, puzzled looks from both of her friends, and Cat leaped up as if the sound of footsteps echoing across the gateway hall came as a welcome interruption. "*Lek! It is Lek she cares for!*" thought Arl and Fith in the same moment, and they stared at each other in amusement and delight. (*Dancers* 196)

The place Cat describes, of course, is Up Top. Many of the half-formed, as-yet-unwritten tales lead to Up Top, and of course there are Ray Siler's Mattick cousins in *The Watchers,* whose forebears lived there. They are (though I never said so) descended from Madoc. Welsh legend may have lost track of him, but I know that he sailed back again across the Atlantic from Wales two years after the last is heard of him in *Over the Sea's Edge.*

And now Cat and Lek seem headed there. I can't be sure yet, but perhaps I am making it a gathering place through time of those strong ones who turn their backs upon their worse selves and become the guardians of the future. It has been eight years since I set Cat and Lek upon their uncertain quest. There is no path to bear them to Up Top, but perhaps they will arrive one day. When they have found themselves.

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Children without dreams do not grow.
They only grow older.
For that matter, adults without dreams
neither grow nor change.
—Jane Louise Curry

Turtles All the Way Down

by

Jane Yolen

(The following was a presentation delivered to institute participants, faculty, staff, and the general public on June 14, 1990, on the East Tennessee State University campus.)

The famous philosopher Will James had just finished giving a lecture on the solar system in Cambridge, Massachusetts, when he was approached by an elderly admirer. She was shaking her head and her umbrella and looking very stern.

"Mr. James," she admonished him, "I am shocked by your notion that we live on a ball rotating around the sun. That is patently absurd."

Politely, James waited, inclining his head toward her.

"We live on a crust of earth on the back of a giant turtle," the grande dame announced.

James, ever gentle, asked, "If your . . . um . . . theory is correct, madam, what does this turtle stand upon?"

"The first turtle stands on the back of a second far larger turtle, of course," the old woman replied.

James lifted his hand. "Ah, madame, but what does this *second* turtle stand upon?"

The dowager's eyes were bright. She laughed triumphantly, "It's no use, Mr. James—it's turtles all the way down!"

And so it is with writing fantasy—whether books for adults or children, whether a plot revolving around elves or unicorns or travel through time or angels stalking the earth or Chinese dragons having tea with detectives. Each book stands on the back of story. And as the old lady in Cambridge would agree, it's no use—it's story all the way down.

Author of more than one hundred books, Jane Yolen is also an editor, storyteller, and folk musician. ***Owl Moon***, illustrated by John Schoenherr, was awarded the Caldecott Medal in 1988. Among her well known story collections are ***Dream Weaver***, ***Neptune Rising***, and ***The Girl Who Cried Flowers***.

The writing of fantasy relies on that relationship, thrives on the ironies of a modern intelligence at work on the old tales, is enhanced by the juxtaposition of what-we-know-now and what-we-once-believed. Making fantasy stories is *sciamachy*, or boxing with shadows. Old shadows. Devious shadows. Wily shadows. Weird shadows. Our own shadows.

Writer as the Careful Observer

Since the creating of fantasy worlds, which contains universes, is built on the sturdy crust of story, the first important rule is that one needs to be sure of one's roots. Socrates said this about allegories and myths:

> He is not to be envied who has to invent them; much labor and ingenuity will be required of him; and when he has once begun, he must go on and rehabilitate centaurs and chimeras dire. Gorgons and winged steeds flow in apace, and numberless other inconceivable and portentous monsters. And if he is skeptical about them, and would fain reduce them one after another to the rules of probability, this sort of crude philosophy will take up all his time.

In other words, do your research and believe in your monstrosities—at least as long as you are writing of them. Otherwise your skepticism will translate into condescension on the pages and alienate readers.

It is difficult enough to make believable what is not, in broad daylight, believable: the seelie court alive and well in Minneapolis, water rats and moles conversing and messing about in boats, a furry-footed manikin out to save the world by tossing away a magic ring, a boy pulling a sword and thus becoming a king, a young man fighting his shadow self for possession of power, a young woman calling her dark sister out of a mirror, a world in which dragons can be ridden through time and alternate space. The writer of such stories must know something, then, about the seelie court, about the habits of water rats and moles, about his own furry-footed manikin's genealogy, about all the things that will bolster belief. Belief by the author, belief by the reader.

Background, then, is important. The landscape of the world must be carefully limned. Sometimes, as in Emma Bull's *War for the Oaks*, the place is real and the author lives there. Still, as well as Bull knows Minneapolis, she had to research material on the seelie or elvin court. Sometimes the author takes a trip to the place, as Ellen Kushner did for her novel *Thomas the Rhymer*, striding across the Eildon Hills of Scotland, avoiding cowpats and taking notes. As I did for *The Dragon's Boy*, scouting the Glastonbury marshes for duckweed and frogbit and bright-yellow kingcup and the white clusters of milk parsley, my wildflower book in hand. Sometimes the research is done in libraries only, as Susan Shwartz did for her fantasy novels about the Silk Roads. But in fantasy, outer landscape reflects inner landscape. The hills and mountains must be true, whether they are based on actual places like Minneapolis or Scotland or England or China—or are made up analog fashion, from places in the author's mind. All of the fantasy authors I know own research volumes on wildlife, wildflowers, insects, birds. *Peterson's Guides* have a use Roger Tory Peterson never intended, perhaps, but they are useful all the same.

Analog fashion. By that I mean if you are not using the city of Minneapolis or the actual Eildon Hills or the fenland around Glastonbury with the tor mounding up over the quaking land, but rather a construct of your own, it needs to have some sort of referent in real life. Writers need to be observers first.

If you have never seen a mountain, I mean really *looked* at one, don't put a mountain in your fantasy land. If you have not studied a wildflower and noted that certain types grow in marshy places, others in drier scrub, then don't pepper your fantastic landscape with red and blue *catch-me-nevers* or *beggar-my-neighbors* or whatever you decide to call them. You are sure to describe a hothouse variety where only a scraggle-rooted one will do. And don't send seabirds sailing over mountaintops, or water pippits stalking up rock slides. Look hard at the real world and then look slightly askance. That is how you make your fantasy analog. As Emily Dickinson advised in one wise little poem, "Tell all the truth / but tell it slant." Fantasy looks at the world through slotted eyes.

So, too, the creatures of a fantastic world need careful observation. If you intend to use elves, for example, don't rely on Tolkien or any other modern writer's elves. Go back to source. You will find that elves are not the cute, pointy-eared, fur-loinclothed critters that modern comic books would have us believe. Rather, according to older lore gleaned from such books as Katherine Briggs's *The Fairies in English Tradition and Literature* or her *An Encyclopedia of Fairies*, they are amoral, they are lovers of tidyness, and they set high value on courtesy and respect, and yet "honesty means nothing to [them]. They consider they have right to whatever they need or fancy, including . . . human beings themselves." Or if you want to put dragons in your story, find out as much about the difference between Western and Eastern dragons as a start, and then decide if your dragons *could* exist. (Would they, for example, need hollow bones like large birds?) If you wish Wotan or Coyote or Manannan MacLir to come striding into your fantasy, go back to source to get the descriptions of clothing, speech patterns, and the color of mist that wraps around the god. If you decide to depart from source, at least *you will know what you are departing from.* The dilution of modern mythologies comes from writers who think that a Dungeons and Dragons manual is prime source material or that they can know all about Hercules from watching B movies and learning what the acronym SHAZAM stands for.

So the writer as careful observer comes first. If the writer creates what Eleanor Cameron calls "the compelling power of place," building up the fantasy world or the real world in which the fantastic takes place with a wealth of corroborating details, the reader will *have* to believe in the place. If the place is real enough, then the fantasy creatures and characters—dragon or elf lord or one-eyed god or the devil himself—will stride across that landscape leaving footprints that sink down into the mud. And if those creatures are also compelling, having taken root in the old lore and been brought forward in literary time by the carefully observing author, those footprints in the mud can be taken out, dried, and mounted on the wall.

Writer as Vatic Voice

The vatic voice is the prophetic or inspired or oracular voice. Nowhere in writing is this voice used as narrative so well as in the literature of the fantastic. Fantasy is dreamer's history and often it is the dreamer's voice, the bard afire with the word of God, *vates.*

The voice of fantasy pipes through the writer down strange new-yet-old valleys wild. There is nothing tame in the world of faerie. Tendrils of green lianas crawl across the paths. Invisible beasts call from behind dark trees. The world is moonlit, a chiaroscuro world where light and dark are in constant play. But the calling is not one voice, the piping not one single tone. One might almost name three: the oracle, the schoolboy, and the fool.

The oracular voice speaks in a metaphoric mode, from hollow caves, out of swirling mists of perfumed, drugging smoke, in riddles and gnomic utterances. It sings with the bardic full chest tones. This is the sound of the high fantasy novel. Three who do it to perfection are J. R. R. Tolkien, Ursula Le Guin, and Patricia McKillip. Others include Robin McKinley, Meredith Ann Pierce, and Lloyd Alexander. It is no coincidence that riddles play an important role in their books.

There is the riddle of the ring poem in the beginning of *The Lord of the Rings* that binds the three books (really four, counting *The Hobbit*) with as fierce a power as the rings bind the characters who dare put them on.

And in Le Guin's *The Wizard of Earthsea*, the riddles Ged, the young master wizard, must ask himself, have to do with shadow and substance, good and evil, light and dark. He is told by the Master Wizard:

> This sorcery is not a game we play for pleasure or for praise. Think of this: that every word, every act of our Art is said and is done for good or for evil. Before you speak or do you must know the price that is to pay!

Ged answers, driven by shame: "How am I to know these things when you teach me nothing?" His finding the right answers to the riddles of his master's teachings is, of course, the basic thrust of the book.

Patricia McKillip uses the riddle itself as the main metaphor for her entire trilogy. In *The Riddle Master of Hed*, the riddle is the key to Morgon's self-knowledge. As he says, "The stricture according to the Riddle-Masters at Caithnard is this: 'Answer the unanswered riddle!' So I do." And he spends the rest of the three volumes trying to learn to temper his passion for unriddling with wisdom, compassion, and an understanding (inherent in all great fantasy novels) that *magic has consequences*.

The oracular tones are the full *basso profundo* of fantasy dialects, the ground bass on which the melodies of the others overswell. The words are sometimes archaic—elven, sorcery, stricture. Sometimes they are fanciful, Latinate, sonorous. There is frequent use of alliterations: "a *ring* to *rule* them"; "*pleasure* or for *praise*." And the sentences, like chants, often end on that full stop, the strong stress syllable that reminds one of a knell rung on a full set of bells. One can declaim high fantasy, sing out whole paragraphs, even chapters. I expect that if they were set to music, it would be Beethoven, full and echoing, melodic, resonant, touching deep into the most private places of the heart.

The schoolboy voice is more securely set in the here and now. While fantasy figures bend and bow around it, the voice remains childlike, innocent, a sensible commentary on the imaginary. Ray Bradbury, E. Nesbit, C. S. Lewis, Diana Wynne Jones, and Natalie Babbitt reign supreme here. The voice speaking in ordinary tones about the extraordinary recalls us to our humanity in the midst of the fantastic.

Listen to the way a Nesbit child reacts when first coming upon a psammead, a creature that has "eyes on long horns like a snail's eyes . . . a tubby body . . . shaped like a spider's and covered with thick soft fur . . . and . . . hands and feet like a monkey's." She says: "What on earth is it? . . . Shall we take it home?" which seems eminently childlike and sensible.

And while in C. S. Lewis's Narnia wars and witches are raging, the voice of a very real British schoolboy, Eustace, meeting the elegant and marvelous talking mouse Reepicheep, who has just bowed and kissed Lucy's hand, remonstrates:

> "Ugh, take it away," wailed Eustace. "I hate mice. And I never could bear performing animals. They're silly and vulgar and—and sentimental."

Two schoolchildren's reactions to marvels: opposite, apposite, and very real.

And when Winnie Foster in Babbitt's *Tuck Everlasting* first hears the strange story of the Tucks and their water of everlasting life, she thinks not about the unbelievability of their history but rather about the humanity that confronts her:

> It was the strangest story Winnie had ever heard. She soon suspected that they had never told it before, except to each other—that she was their first real audience; for they gathered around her like children at their mother's knee, each trying to claim her attention, and sometimes they all talked at once, and interrupted each other in their eagerness.

There, quite simply, is the key to the schoolboy voice. The child in this kind of fantasy takes over the role of the adult, shepherding the fantastic creatures through their paces, guiding, guarding—even when frightfully afraid—for this world belongs *to* the child, this world in which magic has slipped through. And it is not the magic itself that is startling, because children expect that kind of magic to occur, but the vulnerability of the creatures of magic who are sad in their magnificence and, in Eustace's words, sometimes "silly and vulgar and—and sentimental." The child responds to this vulnerability by becoming both more childlike and yet adult, a paradox seen whenever a child plays house, giving advice and taking it at one and the same time.

These are the middle tones, carrying the tunes so familiar to us, dancing in and out of the fantastic as a Bach fugue does, using a simple tune made more complex by its interweaving; plain, unelaborated except where the fantastic itself is concerned, it is the everydayness of the language that reveals when set against the extraordinary. Natalie Babbitt does this brilliantly, eschewing the fanciful for the ordinary in the opening of *Tuck Everlasting*. She reports with a painter's eye, and that report becomes the metaphor for the book:

> The first week of August hangs at the very top of summer, the top of the live-long year, like the highest seat of a Ferris wheel when it pauses in its turning. The weeks that come before are only a climb

> from balmy spring, and those that follow a drop to the chill of autumn, but the first week of August is motionless, and hot. It is curiously silent, too, with blank white dawns and glaring noons, and sunsets smeared with too much color. Often at night there is lightning, but it quivers all alone. There is no thunder, no relieving rain. These are strange and breathless days, the dog days, when people are led to do things they are sure to be sorry for after.

The third voice, high and piercing, full of ridiculous trills and anachronisms, ludicrous and punning, is the voice of the fool. But don't be guiled by it. Underneath the pratfalls and the bulbous-nose mask, behind the wild shrieks and the shaking of slapsticks, lie deep, serious thoughts. As Montaigne says in his *Essays*, attributing it to Cato the Elder, "Wise men have more to learn of fools than fools of wise men."

Examples of this voice are Lewis Carroll, Sid Fleischman, Norton Juster, Terry Prachett, Esther Friesner, and Craig Shaw Gardner. Like a comic opera by Mozart, there are wild, sweet melodies hidden amid the silliness, and you would be a fool indeed to miss them.

When Lewis Carroll invented his Mad Teaparty, he little knew that it would serve generations of English teachers and writers as well as children. Listen:

> "You should say what you mean," the March Hare went on.
> "I do," Alice hastily replied, "at least—at least I mean what I say—that's the same thing, you know."
> "Not the same thing a bit!" said the Hatter. "Why, you might just as well say 'I see what I eat' is the same thing as 'I eat what I see'!"
> "You might just as well say," added the March Hare, "that 'I like what I get' is the same thing as 'I get what I like'!"
> "You might just as well say," added the Dormouse, which seemed to be talking in its sleep, "that 'I breathe when I sleep' is the same thing as 'I sleep when I breathe'!"
> "It *is* the same thing with you," said the Hatter.

That is not just straight silliness. The applicability to everyday life is so fierce in *Alice in Wonderland* that I wish to remind you of the time of Watergate in this country when the following phrases—and more—were lifted from the *Alice* books by columnists, commentators, essayists, and editorialists and used to explain politics:

> "I told you butter wouldn't suit the works"
> "Believing six impossible things before breakfast"
> "Sentence first, verdict after"
> "Curiouser and curiouser"

Sid Fleischman's humor is regional, hyperbolic, and anything but casual. The silliness is unrelieved, or so it seems. But Fleischman is a traditionalist when it comes to humor, and he knows well how to disguise pain with the puttynose, to teach us wisdom with a wisecrack.

In *Chancy and the Grand Rascal*, my favorite of his many books, Chancy, who is so skinny he'd "have to stand twice to throw a shadow," goes through a series of picaresque adventures in order to find his family because "kin belonged together, didn't they?" And when a wicked man is described as "gander-necked . . . with a nose like a stick," the absurdity of it sets the tone and character with economy and grace. We laugh, but we are properly fearful, too.

Norton Juster's *The Phantom Tollbooth* is not just a book-long play on words, although at times it may seem so:

> "If you please," said Milo [speaking to King Azaz the Unabridged] ". . . your palace is beautiful."
>
> "Exquisite," corrected the duke.
>
> "Lovely," counseled the minister.
>
> "Handsome," recommended the count.
>
> "Pretty," hinted the earl.
>
> "Charming," submitted the undersecretary.
>
> "SILENCE," suggested the king. "Now young man, what can you do to entertain us? Sing songs? Tell stories? Compose sonnets? Juggle plates? Do tumbling tricks? Which is it?"
>
> "I can't do any of those things," admitted Milo.
>
> "What an ordinary little boy," commented the king. "Why my cabinet members can do all sorts of things. The duke here can make mountains out of molehills. The minister splits hairs. The count makes hay while the sun shines. The earl leaves no stone unturned. And the undersecretary," he finished ominously, "hangs by a thread. Can't you do anything at all?"

That is a hymn to language, our use and misuse of it, that William Safire, Russell Baker, and Edwin Newman would envy. But it is also story—not Sunday editorial polemic.

In the end, of course, the voice of fantasy is not a particular dialect at all—not the oracle, the schoolboy, the fool. There is a much older voice that lies in back of them all—the storyteller's voice—bridging the gap of history, singing to us out of the mists of time, telling truths.

As the Maori people say when beginning a tale:

> The breath of life,
> The spirit of life,
> The word of life,
> It flies to you and you and you,
> Always the word.

If the fantasy story does not have that breath of life, whether it uses the words of the oracle, the schoolboy, or the fool, it does not deserve to live and will lie, stillborn, on the pages of a dust-covered book.

Writer as Visionary

It surprises no one that writers of realistic fiction write about the society in which they live, that their stories reflect current thinking, and that fictional accounts of child abuse or women's rights or nuclear issues are published in the decade of public awareness and social legislation. But fantasy authors are just as mired in society as authors of realistic work are, though their work is like the wicked queen's magic mirror that does not always give back the expected answer.

For example, Charles Kingsley's *Water Babies* is a picture of the underbelly of English society in the nineteenth century, but the plight of poor chimney sweeps is only the mirror's first casting. What Kingsley didn't realize was that later readings would judge his anti-black, anti-Jewish, and anti-Catholic attitudes, which are only slightly disguised in the book, rather more harshly than he ajudged the rich-poor dichotomy. Rudyard Kipling's otherwise brilliant *The Jungle Books* is marred by jingoism. *Mary Poppins* and *Dr. Doolittle* share a cultural bias against peoples of color. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in its first printing showed the Oompa-loompahs with skin "almost black" because they are "Pygmies . . . imported directly from Africa," as if they were so much yardgoods. In later printings of the book the little workers in Willy Wonka's factory have been transmogrified into a different color and a different place of origin.

What is easy to see with these examples is that fantasy books deal with issues (consciously or unconsciously, in a good light or in a bad) as thoroughly as realistic fiction, but *one step removed.* For example, Randall Jarrell's book *The Bat Poet* is about the artist in society, Le Guin's *Tehanu* about woman's power, Patricia Wrightson's *A Little Fear* about active old age, my *Sister Light, Sister Dark* about the integration of personality as well as the inaccuracies of history.

But it is the phrase *one step removed* that is the most important. Fantasy fiction, by its very nature, takes us out of the real world. Sometimes it takes us to another world altogether: Demar, Middle Earth, Narnia, Earthsea, Prydain, the Dales. Sometimes it changes the world we know in subtle ways, such as showing us the "little people" who live behind the walls of our houses and "borrow" things. Or that in a very real barn, but out of our hearing and sight, a pig and a spider hold long, special conversations. Sometimes a book of fantasy travels us between planets (*A Wrinkle in Time*), between worlds (the *Oz* books), or the traveler himself is from somewhere else, such as Nesbit's psammead or Bull's pucca or Diana Wynne Jones's goon.

By taking that one step away from the actual world, the writer of fantasy can allow the reader to pretend that the book is not talking about the everyday, the mundane, the real society when indeed it is. It is a convention all agree to. A mask. In eighteenth-century Venice, when masked balls were common, it became a convention that a person who wished to go about the street and be treated as if he were disguised needed only to wear a pin in the shape of a mask on his lapel. Thus accoutred, he was considered masked and could act out any part he wished without fear of shame or retribution or recognition.

So fantasy novels go capped and belled into literary society, saying in effect: this is not the real world we are talking of, this is of course faerie, make-believe, where bicolored rock pythons speak, where little girls converse with packs of cards, where boys become kings by drawing swords from stones, and where caped counts can suck the blood of beautiful women in order to live forever.

Children who read fantasy *may* be beguiled, because they *may* not totally understand the conventions. They mistake the pin for the real. They write to Maurice Sendak and ask for directions to the place where the Wild Things live. They believe in Narnia and Middle Earth and Prydian and Demar, and for them these worlds *may* become even more real than the everyday. After all, when we write about such places we must adhere to three very persuasive laws: first, that the fantasy world have identifiable and workable laws underpinning it. (Lloyd Alexander says that "Underneath the gossamer is pre-stressed concrete.") Second, that there is a hero or heroine who often is lost, unlikely, powerless at first or second glance, or unrecognized and therefore easy for the reader to identify with. And third, that in a fantasy novel things always end justly—though not always happily. Come to think of it, adults also are beguiled—at least for the length of the book—that such things are so because of those three laws.

Therefore, it is important that writers of fantasy be aware of the moral underpinnings of their work. Lloyd Alexander wrote, "Fantasy, by its power to move us so deeply, to dramatize, even melodramatize, morality, can be one of the most effective means of establishing a capacity for adult values." Thus the writer of a fantasy novel must have a vision of the world, must be a visionary.

Of course, there is this to be understood about writing any kind of novel: the novelist knows very little about what she or he is doing at the start. We learn more as events, characters, and landscape take form. Every plunge into a new novel is a parallel adventure—for the hero and the novelist. Like our fictional counterparts, we take a journey into the unknown. We authors are Joseph Campbell's definition of the hero: "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won; the hero comes back with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man." We venture forth from our writing rooms—the *world of common day*—into the *supernatural wonder* of the story. We encounter *supernatural forces* like slippery words, monstrous, unwieldy plots. *The decisive victory* won is the book completed. And after all, there is only one letter difference between the words *boon* and *book*, which we bestow on readers everywhere.

Once we understand the vision, it is our basic charge that we must write all stops out to make that vision sing. It is, after all, what fantasy does best, has done always. Turtles all the way down.

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Truth on a Slant: The Psychic History of the Gender Wars in the Jenna Novels of Jane Yolen

by

Robert J. Higgs

Tell all the truth but tell it slant—
Success in Circuit lies. . . . Emily Dickinson

The novels of Jane Yolen dealing with the myth of the white goddess, *Sister Light, Sister Dark* (1988) and *White Jenna* (1989), illustrate the profundity of fantasy literature. Interwoven in the texts are the great ideas from established sources such as *The White Goddess* by Robert Graves, *The Great Mother* by Erich Neumann, and the writings of Carl and Emma Jung as well as those from more recent books such as *Descent to the Goddess* by Sylvia Brinton Perera and *Dreaming the Dark* by Starhawk. The intellectual content of Yolen's two novels in no way detracts from their magic; the psychological freight is transported with ease and charm.

Like poetry and prophecy, these novels are told on a "slant" so any revelation comes by glimpses and usually then out of the corner of one's eye. Her use of "The Legend," "The Myth," "The Song," "The Tale," and "The History" as thematic brackets for "The Story" is clever, allowing her the opportunity to contrast "The History" with the other modes. This she does with biting satire directed against the tunnel vision of historians. It is more of a bureaucratic, pontificating voice that is satirized in "The History" rather than history itself or all historians. Time and again the historian fails to realize that history is both an art and a science and only one approach to truth.

The power of myth is another approach to truth. Erich Neumann uses the term "psychic history," which is an interpretation of history and psychology as reflected in myth, to help explain our own psyches. By myth I do not mean that a story is false in the sense of being contrary to actual occurrence of events; rather, myth is a version of events that is retold to subsequent generations to inspire and empower them. Myth and history are like intertwining threads or clues that run through the detritus of the past so that one cannot touch one without moving the other. The situation, though, is even more complicated. Since history is inevitably viewed through the glasses of sex and gender, historians themselves reflect various psychological perspectives, often unconsciously, as shown by G. Rattray Taylor in *Sex in History*.

Note that the ex-president and two-time general secretary of the Dalien Historical Society suggests that the Jenna story is only myth without any historical basis: "We must, therefore, look deeper than the mere rota of events for the real meaning of the Anna of the Dales. We must probe into the very psyche of the Isles before we can begin to understand what needs brought forth a folk creature of such staying power as the Amazonian White Goddess during the time of the brutal and devastating Gender Wars" (*SL,SD* 234).

Obviously this gentleman wants to look into the "psyche of the Isles" to explain away the myths. He will not even acknowledge "The Gender Wars" as such, choosing instead to call them "wars of succession" and defending his position by saying that the "Book of Battles" shows "both sexes fighting side by side" (*WJ* 101). What he has done is to confuse "sex (a biological category) and gender (a social construct)," or to use the language of Susan Birrell (293) which corresponds to the definitions of Gerda Lerner in *The*

A professor at East Tennessee State University, Robert "Jack" Higgs teaches courses in American Literature. His most recent books include *Laurel and Thorn: The Athlete in American Literature* (Kentucky 1981); *Sports: A Reference Guide* (Greenwood 1982); and a forthcoming book entitled *God in the Stadium, Muscle in the Church: The Triumph of Knighthood and the Heresy in American Sports*. His honors include Distinguished Faculty Member, ETSU (1972); ETSU Foundation Research Award (1982); Exceptional Achievement Award (1984), awarded by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education to each of eight finalists for National Professor of the Year, 1984.

Creation of Patriarchy: "Gender is a set of cultural roles" (238). Whereas the terms *male* and *female* relate to biological sex—not to sexual activity—the terms *masculine* and *feminine* refer to social and cultural qualities that ideally should be balanced in both men and women so that both and, as a result, society as well, are as humanly "engendered" as possible. In "The Story" both sexes do fight side by side, Jenna and Carum for instance, but they are set against the forces of Kalas not because those forces are men but because they rule with an "iron fist."

Psychology, then, may be regarded as the third thread plaited with those of myth and history. Psychology, or rather one's psychological orientation, colors interpretations of both myth and history which themselves take on overtones of gender—myth being more feminine in its requirements for analogical interpretation (symbolic reasoning) and history more masculine in its requirement for so-called hard facts (logical reasoning).

Acknowledging the impossibility of separating myth, history, and psychology, I want to look at each in order to understand Yolen's "slanted" message for our own gender health.

The fundamental myth of the novel is that of "The Anna" which, according to Robert Graves, means "Queen" or "Goddess mother." For pages Graves describes her many manifestations over the centuries in her beneficent and maleficent aspects. Graves leaves no doubt that Anna too is a hero with a thousand faces. "And indeed if one needs a single, simple, inclusive name for the Great Goddess, Anna is the best choice. To Christian mystics she is 'God's Grandmother'" (372). Whether pagan or Christian or some combination, each and every face of the Great Anna is a reflection of the gender projections of culture which means her countenance is constantly changing and revolving. Mother Alta, author of the *Book of Light*—a name Yolen may have derived from the Celtic *Book of Rights*— expressed it this way to Jenna: "You want to be and not to be *The* Anna. But there are many Annas. Have been many. Will be again. Oh, they will not be called *Anna*. Their names will be a multitude. . . . But you are *The* Anna for *this* turning" (*WJ* 76).

The White Goddess is often a symbol of fertility and wisdom but she is also fierce in battle. In ancient Sumer she was known as Innana,

> the goddess of war. Battle is "the dance of Innana," and giving victory, she is "the quiver ready at hand, . . . in the heart of battle, . . . the arm of the warriors. More passionate than Athena . . . she is described in one hymn as "all-devouring in . . . power . . . attacking like the attacking storm," having an "awesome face" and "angry heart," and she sings with abandoned delight of her own glory and prowess: "Heaven is mine, earth is mine, I—, a warrior am I. Is there a god who can vie with me?" "The gods are sparrows—I am a falcon. . . ." (Perera 17)

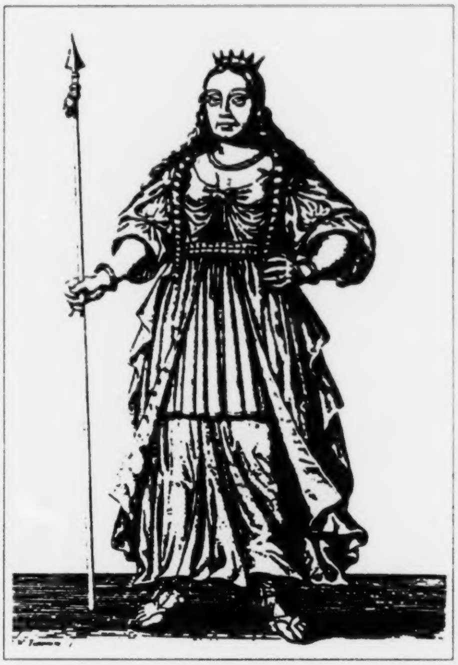
Robert Graves notes this bellicose aspect in the story of the *Battle of the Trees* where another name for the Goddess is Achren ("Trees") (341). Like other deities the White Goddess has strength as well as wisdom which is often reflected by Jenna, whose name is also "Tree." Like the oak and acorn Jenna is old and young at once—that is, eternal.

In retribution against Kalas and his sons (the hound, the bull, the cat, and the bear) Jenna, like Innana, is unforgiving and here there is ample precedence, both in myth and history of the British Isles, though it is difficult to separate one thread from another. In her impressive study, *Pagan Celtic England,* Anne Ross points to abundant evidence of the power of goddesses in Celtic society, including war. Known by the names of Morrigan and the Machas, the war goddesses usually influenced the outcome of battle by magic and incantation, but in Ireland the Machas held "dominance over males by wiles and physical force" (220). Another war goddess, Maeve or Medb ("Drunk Woman"), fights in battles with weapons and has an insatiable sexual appetite, giving birth to numerous children. With her fighting heart and fertile womb, she is, says Ross, "the complete Celtic personification of the mother-warrior deity" (224). She reputedly said, "I can best thirty men a day—on the battlefield or on the bed" (Stone 69). She was thus a match for Beowulf who also had the strength of thirty men. She was known too as "Queen of Faerie" and "Magical Mab" whose spirit "floats heaviest in the mist near a cave . . . to the Netherworld . . . not far from the town of Elphin" (Stone 68). Any goddess known as "Magical Mab" more than likely caught Jane Yolen's attention somewhere along the line.

The historical thread becomes more visible in the example of Boudicca, a queen of an early British tribe Iceni.

The historical thread becomes more visible in the example of Boudicca, a queen of an early British tribe Iceni in what is now Norfolk and Suffolk. Following the death of her husband the king Prasutagus, the Romans seized her territory, flogged her, and raped her two daughters. To add to these grievances and others, the Romans attacked the "headquarters of the Druidic religion, the vital element of the native Celtic culture" (Dudley and Webster 53). In revenge Boudicca led a rebellion that succeeded in the capture of Londinium (London) and the death of 70,000 Romans and pro-Roman Britons. The Greek historian Dio described her in this way:

> She was huge of frame, terrifying of aspect, and with a harsh voice. A great mass of bright red hair fell to her knees: she wore a great twisted golden necklace, and a tunic of many colours, over which was a thick mantle, fastened by a brooch. Now she grasped a spear, to strike terror in all who watched her. (Dudley and Webster 54)



BOUDICCA

(From *The Rebellion of Boudicca* by Donald R. Dudley and Graham Webster)

When her rebellion was quelled by the Roman governor Suetonius, at the cost of 200,000 of her men, she took poison, according to one account, and died. Alas, as admirable as Boudicca's rebellion is in British eyes, as in Tennyson's tribute, her forces also apparently turned tyrannical, inflicting unspeakable atrocities, possibly ritualistic, on women when her army took London (Dudley and Webster 68, 151-52). Those of Boudicca's army who committed such evil against the women in "the groves of Andrasta" (goddess of victory) are among the prototypes of Kalas and his sons, as are the Romans who first outraged her, her family and country. Wherever one opens the door in history there is apt to be gender war, and women are often the victims even when other women are in positions of power, which in history may have been the case more often than we admit. According to Tacitus, the early Britons did "not distinguish between the sexes in positions of authority" (48).

Gender harmony
vs.
Gender massacre

His own times, Hamlet said, were out of joint, and so have been most times in terms of gender harmony, some more severely skewed than others so that a crisis is reached, according to the Grenna Folk and Mother Alta, every few hundred years, "core to rind, rind to core," "the world's paring." The crises peak but never end. "It is the fight that goes on and on in this circle," says Mother Alta. "The fight to bring light and dark together. The fight to bring men and women together" (*WJ* 79). This is the eternal challenge in fact. The task of the newly elevated Virgin in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was to turn men's attention from the erotic love of the Lady of Thoughts and indulgent feasting, as presided over by Diana, to divine love, but the love and wisdom that the new queen of heaven was supposed to symbolize did not rub off on the patriarchal church which in 1209 launched the first genocide against the Cathars or the "Church of Love" (Rougemont 111). "In Toulouse some 60,000 passive resisters—men, women, and children—were burned or put to the sword in a single day" (Ravenscroft 14). This can easily be called a gender war or gender massacre simply because the heretics did not give homage to the same goddess and god that the patriarchal church proclaimed. Gerda Lerner gives a more encompassing reason:

> The gender-defined role of warrior led men to acquire power over other men and women of conquered tribes. Such war-induced conquest usually occurred over people already differentiated from the victors by race, ethnicity, or simple tribal difference. In its ultimate origin, "difference" as a distinguishing mark between the conquered and the conquerors was based on the first clearly observable difference, that between the sexes. (214)

Another example of a gender massacre can be seen in the history of witchcraft, and here women were the principle victims though not the only ones. Looking at the Renaissance not through the right eye of art, science, and humanism but through the left eye of the witch, Starhawk, who cites several sources mostly by women, reminds us of the repressive side of this great leap forward into enlightenment.

> Estimates of the actual number of witches executed range from 100,000 to 9,000,000. The higher estimates include many who were not officially executed but died in prison. The true number is difficult to estimate, and this fact is less important than an understanding of the climate of terror that was unleashed. Anyone—especially any woman—could be accused of being a witch. (*Dreaming the Dark* 187)

Whatever their magnitude, these are among what John Updike has called "the forgotten slaughters of history." Jane Yolen does not hesitate to recall such slaughters through her graphic details of the destruction of the Hames. Though the Isles and the Dales are fictional, the events that occur in them are faithful to the outrages visited by the strong upon the weak and the defenseless over the ages. "The Story," thus, is timeless, and Alta's experience symbolic of the elevated consciousness often wrought by suffering.

> I was a woman wed to a king and unable to bear a child. So he put me aside and took another wife. And another. In grief, I began to gather the forgotten girl children left to die on the hills of the Dales. I fashioned little carts and towed them behind me, more in madness than with any goal in mind.
>
> The Grenna found me wandering, crazed, pulling seven carts full of mewling, stinking babes and brought us down here—to the Green World. They taught me how to care for the children: how to play at the wand, how to see in the woods. They told me what would be in the world to come. They showed me how to control my breath and call up my twin. And when they had done all that, they sent us back into the Dales. . . .
>
> When we returned, a new story began and unwanted women—the barren and the homely and the lonely—came to our aid. We built the first Hame near here. (*WJ* 74)

Though the history professor, the ex-president of the Dalien Historical Society, dismisses the Grenna folk in his letter of resignation, Robert Graves, a more intelligent interpreter, offers other possibilities which Yolen, a believer in magic, transmitted into meaning. The green dye of the alder tree, says Graves,

> is associated in British folklore with fairies' clothes: in so far as the fairies may be regarded as survivals of dispossessed early tribes, forced to take to hills and woods, the green of the clothes is explainable as protective colouring: foresters and outlaws also adopted it in medieval times. . . . [T]he alder-branch . . . is a token of resurrection—its buds are set in a spiral. (171, 72)

Eventually the enclosure system in England, according to Starhawk, forced even the Fairies out of the countryside.

> Oral traditions tell us that many Witches, along with remnants of the pre-Celtic people known as Fairies, left Britain at this time. Legends differ about their destination, some say it was Portugal, others say eastern Europe, still others say the New World or the mythical lands of the Otherworld (The Land of Youth, the Isle of Apples, the Summerland). (*Dreaming the Dark* 197-98)

In his denouncement of "the Greenfolk, the Good Folk, the Grenna, the Faire" (*WJ* 54) the staunchly patriarchal professor misses the whole point as literalists often do. It doesn't even matter whether Dr. Magon proved their existence. What matters is that in "The Story" they helped the right people at the right time by the demonstration of tender mercies.

An irony needs to be noted here. Dr. Magon is working just as hard to show that the events of myth did occur as is the author of "The History" to show that they did not, and Yolen is having considerable fun in showing the sterility of the scholarship. Magic cannot prevail either in an atmosphere of denial or confirmation. It belongs to that vast realm between Was and Was Not, the land of Make Believe or Might Have Been. Magic requires some suspension of belief but not of meaning. It requires a sense of play and tolerance as well. On a larger scale, the historians' beaver-like diving and damming to pool up "objective reality" is expressive of the same attitude that drove the Fairies out of England and burned witches at the stake.

The fact that women have been the victims of gender wars—though not the only victims by any means—does not mean that they have never fought back, as the examples of Boudicca and Joan of Arc—an Anna in name and act—amply demonstrate. One of the gender myths of modern Western civilization is that women are ineffectual in combat. While the belief is false, the motivation for fighting among females may be significantly different from that of males as explained by Walter Ong: "females can and do fight physically and violently on occasion, but the occasions are more likely to be realistic and less ceremonial or ritualized, likely to concern more immediate vital issues—for example defense of the young against a predator" (61-62). As opposed to "aggressive military action" and "ritualized" combat, "defensive military action is different, all-out, and women have engaged in it throughout history" (61-62). Note that in Ong's terms Jenna and the women are "fighting for life." They are not on any crusades except Jenna's to defeat Kalas.

Another name for "aggressive military action" and "ceremonial combat" is knighthood which is predominantly a male institution. Significantly Jenna is not a knight but a warrior, and the difference is important. Not even her training is that of the knight whose arts numbered seven to parallel the seven liberal arts of the Middle Ages: grammar, rhetoric, dialect, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. (See Neumann and Graves for a discussion of the meaning of the number seven in the literature of matriarchy.) The seven knightly arts which date to antiquity were riding; swimming; use of crossbow, arm, and handbow; climbing on ladders; fighting in a tournament; wrestling, which included fencing and long jumping; and last, courtly manner at table, dancehall, and board games (Brockhoff 27-28).

While Jenna is capable of performing most of these tasks and learned to do them as needed, riding for instance, the defensive strategy of the Hames and their nurturing tradition has prevented her and her sisters from adopting the same type of systematic training as young knights for adventure in a foreign land. The "mission" is not so much a military adventure as a means of discovery and growth, not conquest but individuation. For instance, Jenna cannot swim, and it is Carum who must help her transit "the Halla," "an unforgiving river" (*SL,SD* 189-93). Though a "scholar," the castle-born Carum underwent some of the training of the knight, having learned the use of bow and sword as well as how to ride and swim and eventually earning the respect of Gorum as a fighter fit to be a king (*WJ* 197). Swimming is one of the oldest requirements for the knight, for it symbolizes the crossing of boundaries, the adventurous act that is the essence of knighthood, invading someone else's home or territory. Jenna on her white horse "Duty" calls to mind still another white goddess myth, that of Epona who was also associated with the myth of the sun (Ross 224-25). Jenna, thus, is a sun goddess as well as a child of the moon. In her the day and the night find balance, the horse serving to extend her power for the task before her.

Just as there are two contrasting sets of imagery for the animals and mothers in "The Story," so there are two sets of knights: on the one hand the three laughing knights of legend who fight for the Anna (*WJ* 46) and on the other hand the Bull, one of the major forces Jenna must overcome as indicated in the song "King Kalas and his Sons": "The bull was a gorer, / The Bull was a knight, / And never a man who would / Run from a fight" (*WJ* 112). The Bull and his father Kalas symbolize, unfortunately, the dominant form of knighthood in Christendom, and if ever there was an institution with warped attitudes of gender it was knighthood. In contrast to the glorified picture of the knight in literature, the historical record is simply deplorable. Says Frances Gies at the end of *The Knight in History*: "Knights fought for profit and killed without mercy, robbed those whom they should have defended, and violated those whom they should have respected" (107). Barbara Tuchman seems pretty much in agreement with this blunt assessment when she writes, "Knights pursued war for glory and practiced it for gain" (81). They sought strength but disdained wisdom (Moolenijzer 35-36) or Sophia, goddess of wisdom, the crucial value in the Hames and the Dales (See the chapter entitled "The Wisdoms of the Dales," *WJ* 263-65).

The female as hero: the Jungian process of integration as illustrated in Yolen's novels

If war creates its own psychology, so psychology has created its own wars or at least major skirmishes such as the celebrated one between Freud and Jung. Yolen does not hesitate to join in the fray. She challenges, for example, at least three theories by male psychologists: Freud's proclamation of penis-envy (595); the claim by Otto Weininger and possibly Rank himself that the double, that is the shadow, "does not appear in the female but solely in the male form" (Introduction to *The Double* xxi); and the argument of Dr. Maurice Bucke that cosmic consciousness is generally off limits to the female (55). Collectively these theories imply that the female cannot be a hero but only the prize of the hero, the boon to the quester but not the bringer of light. Yolen dissents. To the list of heroes that Lord Raglan and Otto Rank examine in *The Hero* and *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* she would add the many manifestations of the Anna.

Restrictive thinking in regard to the heroic has for centuries severely limited the role of women and, consequently men, in western society. In a patriarchal society women were often viewed as sisters of light—nuns or saints—or as sisters of the dark—witches. In both cases they were seen as being without shadows, either all blessed or all dark. Joan of Arc, for instance, was burned as a witch by the British in 1431 and resurrected as a saint by the church in 1920. A woman thus could be dark or light but scarcely a combination. In Yolen's view, the hero quest is for the female, excepting the difference between anima and animus, essentially the same as for the male, a view consistent with Jungian psychology. Like Jung, she sees the heroic effort as an affirmation of life rather than a denial of death. She is in agreement with Joseph Campbell that the task of the hero is "to bring to light again the lost Atlantis of the co-ordinated soul" (389).

There is an important point to be noted in the parallel between Boudicca, Saint Joan, and Jenna. All three are reacting against invasions of their "country" by males. Boudicca struggles to repel the Romans; Saint Joan the British; and Jenna, Kalas and his sons. Turn the matter over as often as we like and admit with Starhawk that men are no more brutal than women or no better, finally, at fighting (*Truth or Dare* 52)—the invasion of others' territories is essentially a male habit, a form of rape. It is no wonder that in democracies the figures of liberty and justice are women.

Justice is a type of centering which is the key concept of the Jungian process of integration, and it is almost perfectly illustrated in Yolen's novels on both the personal and social levels. Mother Alta of the green grove outlined the process to Jenna: first the integration of light and dark, persona and shadow in other words, and then the integration of masculine and feminine, and finally that of the self with the great mother (*WJ* 79). The personas for the girls are established by "the Choosing" in the hame: "Selinda to the garden, Alna to the kitchen, Pynt to the hunt." Jenna of course chooses to be "a warrior. A huntress. A keeper of the wood" (*SL,SD* 43-45). Note that the word "choosing" is the precise word that in Jungian psychology applies to the persona. Says Frieda Fordham, "a man who takes up a business or a profession, a woman who marries or chooses a career, all adopt to some extent the characteristics expected of them in their chosen position; it is necessary to do so in order to succeed" (48).

The persona, however, is only the side of the self we use to face the world. There is another side just as important, the shadow, the being within us who would like to do all the things the persona says we can't. Jung speaks of it as the primitive, uncontrolled, and animal part of ourselves (Fordham 49). Of the same sex as the persona, the shadow wants to grow like a tree and to find fulfillment not in imitation but doing what comes naturally. It is by no means evil as many people think. Jung said it was ninety-percent gold, and Yolen would no doubt agree since her shadow figures instruct and intervene to save the persona of Jenna at crucial times. The delightful Pynt is Jenna's first shadow, but because of size, occupation, or personality she cannot serve as the shadow for the extraordinary role that Jenna has been called to undertake. The figure for this task is the gallant Skada, ever faithful and fierce in combat, rising to save Jenna and to help fulfill the prophecy of the Anna.

The nature of the dark in
Yolen's novels

A question arises as to the nature of the dark in Yolen's novels. There are two types of dark, in fact, just as there is in Jungian psychology. There is the inner dark of the shadow that knows more about what we need than we know ourselves. It knows truths that the persona, wrapped up in career objectives, cannot grasp on its own. The other kind of dark is the outer dark symbolized by Kalas and his sons and their stinking abode. The dark of the shadow is the dark that bears the light of self-knowledge; the outer dark of Kalas' dungeon traps the light and ensnares it. "Kalas' boast is *No one escapes from the Hole whole.*" (*WJ* 238). Kalas' hole is physical, but the hole of the shadow is spiritual, a distinction reflected in Skada's comment that she comes "[f]rom a darker hole than" the Cat "will ever know" (*WJ* 234). Skada is the handmaiden of consciousness; the Cat is a barrier to it. While the shadow belongs to the personal unconscious it is connected to the collective unconscious like an individual tree to the history of the earth and indeed the universe.

One final hope: the integration of
masculine and feminine

The animus for Jenna is Carum who is a scholar, an advanced animus figure in Jung's hierarchy just below that of the prophet or wisdom incarnate (*Man and his Symbols* 194). Trained as a prince, Carum actually retains some of the civilized manners that knights ideally were supposed to exhibit. He and Jenna are made for each other, each compensating for what the other lacks. The animus, Jung says, "can be personified as any male figure, from the most primitive to the most spiritual, depending on the state of a woman's development. He can even appear in dreams as a boy" or he may even "be expressed as a group of men" (Fordham 56). Since men are not allowed in the hames, all Jenna knows is what she has heard collectively about men from the talk in Selden Hame, a collective image that, understandably, is not too flattering for men. In Carum, though, she finds a different type of male and comes to love him. Their marriage is a type of "*hieros gamos*" or sacred marriage (see *Answer to Job* for examples and discussion), the final integration on the divine level of strength and wisdom, masculinity and femininity.

Then Longbow shall be king,
And Jenna shall be queen,

So long as moons they reign,
So long as groves be green.
Holy. Holy. Holy. (*WJ* 255)

I have given the ending a Jungian reading and a traditional one of folk tale in which the young man (or woman) meets a princess (or prince), gains a throne, and lives happily ever after, including the great beyond (Raglan 187). There is, however, another possibility—that it is Jenna and Skada who go together in the hereafter and not Jenna and Carum. Yolen in "The Legend" leaves open this possibility by saying that the women claim that Jenna and Carum remained lovers while the men claim that Longbow Carum was himself sacrificed for the love of "two women [who] can be seen running naked through the glades, women compounded of starlight and water" (*WJ* 261). Thus the gender wars survive in the very legends of men and women themselves, and in the ongoing psychological wars still being waged.

Yolen has drawn significantly upon some of the new age writers such as Starhawk as well as traditional sources such as Jung and Neumann.

It appears, for instance, that Yolen has drawn significantly upon some of the new age writers such as Starhawk as well as traditional sources such as Jung and Neumann. One cannot read works such as *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics; The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* and *Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority, and Mystery* by Starhawk without finding all manner of parallel themes—circles, trees, mirrors, breathing exercises, wand games, chants, and songs at the end of the text, and even the challenge to readers to imagine their own stories about the Innana.

Most important to Yolen's alternate ending in which two women are seen running naked through the glades is the idea of "the companion self" which lies at the heart of Starhawk's psychology. "It is important," she says, "not to associate the companion self with qualities, such as aggression or passivity, that are traditionally considered male or female. The companion self is **not** the Jungian anima or animus, and it does not complete one's personality. Instead it is a source of energy. To resort to a mechanistic metaphor, creating a companion self is like building a generator in the basement instead of plugging into outside power lines" (*Dreaming the Dark* 146). If this "companion self" is neither animus nor anima, neither is it the shadow which is not inclined to love us back. The shadow knows and the shadow nags, and it will not go away even if we refuse to see it in our mirrors.

Basically the issue has to do with the "apparent" love triangle of persona (Jenna), shadow (Skada), and animus (Carum). I say "apparent" since in "The Story" the three get along just fine as mentioned at the end near the entrance to the green kingdom of Alta of the Grove (*WJ* 261). Alta, though, allows only two to enter. Which two of the three that will be is clearly indicated in the essentially Jungian pronouncements by Mother Alta who tells Jenna that the fight is to integrate light and dark and bring men and women together (*WJ* 79). By this reading, when Jenna and Skada embrace in the last line of "The Story," they become one, allowing room in the cave for Carum. This merging of Jenna and Skada is not a "*hieros gamos*" but a sort of death-bed acknowledgement of real identity before the final union with the Great Mother. All along Skada has insisted to Jenna, "I *am* you" (*WJ* 127). The final scene in "The Story" confirms her insight. The shadow, thus, is not wholly other, but the other side of the persona which helps the ego to grow, a key metaphor in the novels.

Significantly, the animus (and anima) reside both in the personal unconsciousness and the collective unconsciousness which means that some response is necessary to the man and woman within and the archetypal man and woman without, even if rejection of all of them is the response. Completeness is the key concept here. Jung distinguished it from perfection so that the more perfect one becomes at thinking, say, the less complete he or she is in feeling (*Answer to Job* 33, 37). Jenna senses this problem even in the logo of the hames, the circle with the two peaks which may well derive from "the paps of Anu" in Kerry (Graves 370). To Jenna the sign was "*too perfect*" and "*perfection is the end of growing*" (*WJ* 77) as Jung too believed.

The image most descriptive of Jenna's journey and accomplishment is that sign made by the girls at the ceremony of "the Choosing": with their right hand on the *Book of Light*, they touch with the left "the four places that were Alta's own: head, left breast, navel, and groin" (*SL,SD* 43). The extensions of these centers form a cross, or within the circle of the Great Mother, a symbol of the mandala or wholeness—the union, I would submit, not only of light and dark, but of masculine and feminine, perfection and completeness. Admittedly it can be argued that the right hand of the girls on the *Book of Light* makes a fifth point or star, Starhawk's major symbol, "the pentagram of pearl" which is also enclosed in a circle (See *Spiral Dance* 65, 80, and chapter logos). Though brilliant and enthralling, the five-point star is uneven, ultimately symbolic not of integration of light and dark but the power of light over dark. It is ironically a sun image or the matriarch become patriarch, what Jung would call a classic case of *enantiodromia*, the inevitable tendency of a quality to turn into its opposite. Mother Alta would not like this symbol as much as the moon; what she really prefers is a symbol uniting sun and moon, the White Jenna.

The shadow is an indispensable element in psychic growth.

In contrast to the thinking of Starhawk on the one hand and Freud on the other, Jung sees the shadow in terms of one's own sex—not sexual preference. It is an absolutely indispensable element in psychic growth, and this is the way that Yolen has used the shadow in her novels. Her wisdom here is summed up in the advice presented in "The Legend" of Altenland: "Never mate a shadow. . . . They'll eat away at you if they can" (*WJ* 147). Shadows should always be close but we should never take them to bed, for dreamland is the province of other archetypes. There may be one or two erotic ripples between Jenna and her shadow but these are more symbolic of mutual respect and playfulness than indicative of any passionate, narcissistic affair. In effect Yolen's treatment shows the practical value of the shadow in the process of individuation and growth. Emma Jung put the whole matter succinctly: "What is really necessary is that feminine intellectuality, logos in the woman, should be so fitted into the nature and life of the woman that a harmonious cooperation between the feminine and masculine factors ensues and *no part is left to a shadowy existence*" (13 — emphasis added). This is essentially the same view of Perera (47). Skada's merging with Jenna to make way for the apotheosis of Jenna and Carum is an excellent illustration of the shadow function, keeping in mind that the merging is not a sacrifice but a fulfillment and that Carum does not represent all of the masculine anymore than Jenna represents all of the feminine. Yolen's love of the sisters and their shadows is obvious but so too is the love of Jenna and Carum. Perhaps the most important words in "The Story" are those of Alta to Jenna, "You love both women and men, and that, too, makes you ready for what is to come" (*WJ* 77). The saddest part is that neither the men in "The Legend" nor the author of "The History" learned anything new from "The Story." The world turned before their eyes and nothing was changed. The gender wars, no doubt, will come again if indeed they have ever ceased.

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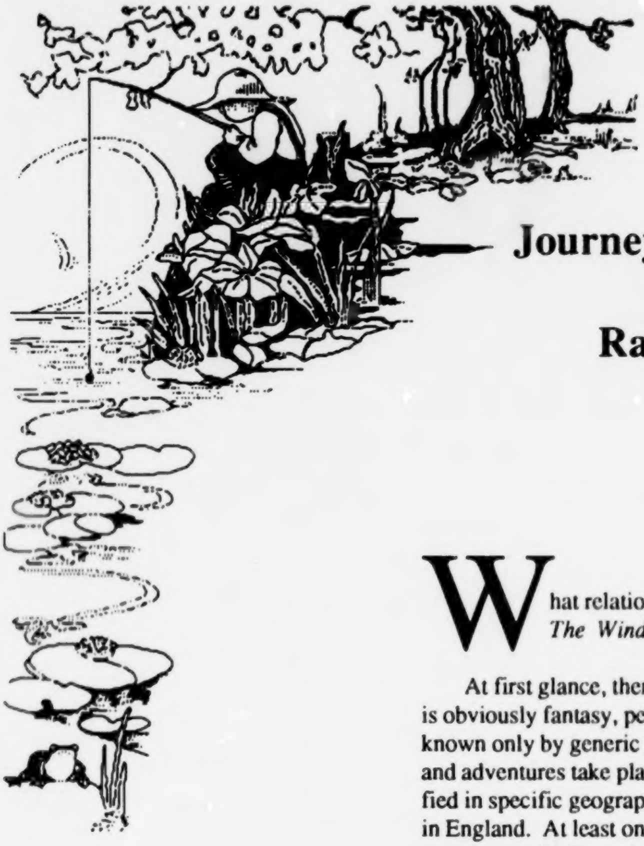

Journey to Freedom and Maturity: Huck Finn and Jim; Ratty, Mole and Mr. Toad

by

Allison R. Ensor

What relationships can we see between *Huckleberry Finn* and *The Wind in the Willows?*

At first glance, there might not seem to be much connection. The latter is obviously fantasy, peopled by the creatures of the wood and river who are known only by generic names—Badger, Rat, Mole and Toad. Their travels and adventures take place within a very small compass, which is not identified in specific geographic terms, except that we know the action takes place in England. At least one of the events which befalls the characters—the encounter with Pan—is strictly fantastic, allegorical, or whatever one may wish to say. The realistic elements in the book largely consist of the human nature which is displayed in the conduct of the various animals. (This, of course, is similar to what happens in Aesop's fables, the stories of Uncle Remus, *Winnie the Pooh,* and the "Fables for Our Time" of James Thurber.) *The Wind in the Willows* is almost universally identified as a children's book—though it clearly has stylistic elements which might make it difficult for some children to understand.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, though also classed at times as a children's book, ranks as one of the great American novels, along with *The Scarlet Letter, Moby Dick,* and whichever James novel you prefer. *Huckleberry Finn* now appears in virtually every college anthology of American literature, and it is frequently taught at the high-school level as well.

Although one can find in Sam Clemens' work evidence of all three nineteenth-century literary movements—romanticism, realism, and naturalism—*Huck Finn* is often described as a great work of realism. Its central characters, Huck and Jim, are realistically portrayed. For one thing, they come from the lower strata of society. Huck is what some would have called "pore white trash," and Jim is a black slave, owned by Miss Watson, the sister of the Widow Douglas who "snaked" Huck "in out of the wet" at the end of the previous novel, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.*

The action of the novel takes place about fifteen years before the beginning of the Civil War, apparently in the mid-1840s. Huck, Jim, and the

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many others white and black who people *Huckleberry Finn,* speak as Mark Twain believed such characters would speak, except that he eliminated all profanity and obscenity from their speech. Not even "damn" or "hell" managed to get in. There is, however, plenty of bad grammar, dialect and non-standard usage. Look at the very first sentence. What if Huck had said, "You do not know about me unless you have read a book entitled *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer,* but that isn't of any consequence. That book was written by Mark Twain, and, for the most part, he told the truth." Some of my teachers might have liked it better, but that wouldn't be the Huck we know, would it? Huck's language is all the more prominent in the novel because Twain chose to use the first-person point of view (where Grahame uses a third-person narrator). We do not hear any outside cultured voice describing the setting or explaining the action to us. Everything comes through Huck's perceptions—a dramatic change from the method of most of the frontier humorists or the local colorists.

Everything comes through Huck's perceptions—a dramatic change from the method of most of the frontier humorists or the local colorists.

The action of *Huck Finn* covers far more territory than that in *The Wind in the Willows.* Huck and Jim begin their journey at the fictional St. Petersburg, Missouri (based on Hannibal), above St. Louis, and proceed south down the Mississippi to Cairo, Illinois, where they intend to switch to the Ohio River, then proceed generally east past Louisville and Cincinnati until they are "amongst the free states." Missing Cairo, they actually continue south until they reach the Phelps plantation, in southeastern Arkansas.

Another obvious point of difference is that *Huckleberry Finn* deals significantly with what is still a great American problem, that of race. Twain's novel was first published in 1884 (the date of the first British edition), almost twenty years after the end of the Civil War, but it depicts a time about forty years earlier, when slavery was still legal in states such as Missouri. A runaway slave, Jim has fled from his owner, Miss Watson, to Jackson's Island. Huck soon identifies with this cause (notice how he tells Jim "They're after us" instead of "They're after you") and joins him in their journey down the river (61). Huck's struggle with his conscience over what he is doing provides some of the most striking passages of the book. He thinks he should believe that what he is doing is wrong, but at the same time he feels it is right. In Twain's terms, his conscience pulls him one way, while his heart would take him another. He has, Twain said, "a sound heart and a deformed conscience" (qtd. in Smith xvi).

It is the racial aspect which has made *Huck Finn* a controversial novel, a book which must be taught with care and caution, especially in the high school. There seem to be increasing numbers of people who want to remove it from school curricula and from library shelves. At least one person has issued a version of the novel which lacks that offensive six-letter word. Some of the simplified versions available for students who don't want to read the real book omit that word too.

I have not heard of any serious objections being raised to *The Wind in the Willows,* though I would not be surprised to hear from some quarters that wine is treated all too favorably, and that the figure of Pan as helper and protector is especially objectionable. "It is God who is our helper and protector, not Pan," they will say. "We don't want our children taught things that contradict the Bible!"

Though these two novels may, at first glance, seem more different than alike, there are some notable similarities in the two books. In the first place, though both are often identified as children's books and read by and to children, there is a sense in which they are **not** merely children's books. They are books to which adults can return and find something which they did not find at first reading. In both books there are passages which children would find rather difficult to understand. In *Huck*, for example, there is Emmeline Grangerford's obituary poetry and the Duke's version of Hamlet's soliloquy (with a good deal of *Macbeth* mixed in). What child is going to understand either one? In *The Wind in the Willows* there is the British idiom, the lyrical passages which have little to do with the action, and the literary allusions such as the inspired title of the last chapter, "The Return of Ulysses."

I think it is worth mentioning that both books have attracted the attention of adapters. *Huck Finn* has been given just about every possible incarnation: film, television program, television series (does anyone remember *The New Adventures of Huckleberry Finn?*), play, opera, and Broadway musical (*Big River*). *The Wind in the Willows* was done as a play by A. A. Milne, the author of *Winnie the Pooh*, in 1929, under the title *Toad of Toad Hall*. In 1949 Walt Disney produced a cartoon version narrated by Basil Rathbone which was released along with "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" as *Ichabod and Mr. Toad*. The Milne and Disney titles certainly indicate that the main focus falls upon Toad. For the home video market, the two Disney cartoons have been separated, with Grahame's story now appearing under its original title, packaged with two short Disney cartoons, one of which seems singularly appropriate: Goofy stars in "Motor Mania."

One major similarity between the two books is the importance which they give to the river. It represented for many "the way out" or "interconnection."

One major similarity between the two books is the importance which they give to the river. I think that in the nineteenth century, water, and particularly rivers, represented for many "the way out" or "interconnection." In the time before the railroad, the highway, or the jet liner, the river was the way to get somewhere else. It connected towns to each other and to the rest of the country. Travelers could come in, and those who lived there could go out. Waterway might lead to waterway: the Missouri leads to the Mississippi, and the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico and ultimately the Atlantic Ocean.

The location of Hannibal, Missouri, on the Mississippi River was highly important for Mark Twain. Readers of *Life on the Mississippi* know well the importance which the river had for Twain. There he speaks of it as "the great Mississippi, the majestic, the magnificent Mississippi, rolling its mile-wide tide along, shining in the sun" (22). The greatest event of the day in Hannibal, so he tells us, was announced by the cry, "S-t-e-a-mboat a-comin'!" The "one permanent ambition" of the boys of Hannibal, he informs us, was to be a steamboatman (22).

Twain tells in *Life on the Mississippi* how he accomplished that dream, first becoming a "traveler," then taking lessons from Horace Bixby, and how he "loved the profession far better than any I have followed since" (70). He intended, he says, to follow it all his life and to "die at the wheel" (109). But it was not to be: the Civil War began, the Mississippi was closed to steamboating, and after two weeks of service in the Confederate army, Mark Twain "lit out for the territory" (as Huck plans to at the end of his novel). In Twain's case, it was the territory of Nevada; he did not return to the East until 1866.

If Twain could no longer be physically present on the river, it certainly was prominent in his creative imagination. Not only *Life on the Mississippi*, but several of his books are set on the river: *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Tom Sawyer and his companions Huck and Joe love nothing better than to head down the river to Jackson's Island. In the sequel, the river takes on far more importance as Huck and Jim travel down it, encountering representative segments of antebellum Southern life.

In *The Wind in the Willows* much is said of the river. Before we can get beyond the second page we find Mole standing "by the edge of a full-fed river," something he has never seen before, and before which he is "bewitched, entranced, fascinated" (2, 3). He feels that the river is speaking directly to him, telling him "a babbling procession of the best stories in the world, sent from the heart of the earth to be told at last to the insatiable sea" (4).

The river is not new to Rat—far from it. He not only lives by it, he tells Mole. He lives "by it and with it and on it and in it" (7). He feels as close to it as if it were a member of his family: "It's brother and sister to me, and aunts, and company, and food and drink, and (naturally) washing. It's my world, and I don't want any other. What it hasn't got is not worth having, and what it doesn't know is not worth knowing. Lord! the times we've had together" (7). Huck Finn would of course have been incapable of saying anything in quite that style, but in spirit he might well have agreed with Rat. And he does wax lyrical about the journey down the river:

> This second night we run between seven and eight hours, with a current that was making over four mile an hour. We catched fish and talked, and we took a swim now and then to keep off sleepiness. It was kind of solemn, drifting down the big, still river, laying on our backs looking up at the stars, and we didn't ever feel like talking loud, and it warn't often that we laughed—only a little kind of a low chuckle. We had mighty good weather as a general thing, and nothing ever happened to us at all—that night, nor the next, nor the next. (63)

As he says later, "It's lovely to live on a raft" (115). The narrator of *The Wind in the Willows* talks of "the river that they knew and trusted in all its moods" (Grahame 64). Huck and Jim's case is similar; their trouble always seems to come when they go ashore—or when someone from the shore comes to them.

My title calls upon me to speak of the journey to freedom and maturity. Let me first say something about Huck's freedom. In the earlier novel, *Tom Sawyer*, the reason Huck is so much envied by the other boys is the freedom he has. They are at the mercy of the demands of the school, the church, their teachers, their parents. Huck, however, is free of such restraints and civilizing influences and so is completely happy and remains so until the Widow Douglas takes him under her wing at the end of the book.

In his own novel, Huck is considerably less free and considerably less happy. He escapes from the Widow and Miss Watson only to find himself in worse trouble at the hands of that notorious child abuser, Pap, who was altogether "too handy with his hick'ry" (39). In the meantime Jim, who has never known the freedom Huck probably once took for granted, fearing that he may be sold to a slave trader, runs away from Miss Watson—who had treated him "pretty rough"—and flees to Jackson's Island. When he and Huck set out down the Mississippi, they are on what they believe will be a journey to freedom, to the "Free States," where Jim will not have to be anyone's slave but can be a free man.

Huck and Jim could have found Cairo, if Mark Twain had wanted them to. They could have sold the raft there, as they had planned, and then have taken passage on a steamboat bound up the Ohio River toward Pittsburgh. Had that happened, it might have been good for Huck and Jim, but it wouldn't have been good for Mark Twain, who did not know the Ohio between Cairo and Pittsburgh nearly so well as he knew the Mississippi between Cairo and New Orleans. And so the raft floats on by Cairo, heading deeper and deeper into the South and slave territory: Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas. Jim's tenuous freedom is in real danger again and again. That he is able to keep it is due to in large part to Huck Finn.

The theme of friendship is so important in both of the books.

This brings us to say more of the theme of friendship, which is so important in both of the books we are looking at. Huck had friends in St. Petersburg, especially Tom Sawyer. The two were not exactly on equal footing, though. Tom was of a distinctly higher class; he regularly attended school, Sunday school, and church. In *Tom Sawyer* Huck readily acknowledged Tom's superior intelligence and indeed superior moral standing. Confronted with the dire prophecy of the howling dog, Huck declares: "You bad! Consound it, Tom Sawyer, you're just old pie, 'longside o' what I am. Oh, *lordy*, lordy, lordy, I wisht I only had half your chance" (71).

In his friendship with Jim, however, matters are considerably changed. Now it is Huck who is recognized by society as the superior one. Jim knows many superstitions, but Huck has far more "book learning" and can laugh at Jim's failure to understand King Solomon's psychological trick or to know that different languages are spoken in different countries. Huck may be "white trash" but he is not black. He is not a slave.

Huck is the product of his times, of course. He has always been told that blacks are inferior. He has never questioned the institution of slavery. He has never doubted that slave owners are entitled to recover their property. When he compliments Jim, it is in terms that seem to us less than complimentary: he is "white inside"; he has "an uncommon level head for a nigger" (264, 74). Everything Huck has heard tells him that it is wrong to help a slave to escape, and yet he does it. Why? A good deal of it has to do with the friendship which develops between the two.

In the beginning Huck is not so good a friend to Jim as he might be. He has identified with him, he is helping him, but he still cannot resist playing a trick on Jim. They have been separated in the fog, and Jim has been greatly worried about Huck; in fact, he is fearful that he is dead. Huck teases Jim by pretending that he knows nothing of what has taken place. Eventually he convinces Jim that it has all been a dream. Jim now interprets the dream, only to be brought up short by Huck's pointing out objects lying on the raft which plainly demonstrate that the events Jim recalls did indeed occur. Jim verbally attacks Huck more severely than at any other point in the novel:

> "When I got all wore out wid work, en wid de callin' for you, en went to sleep, my heart wuz mos' broke bekase you wuz los'. . . . En

> when I wake up en find you back ag'in, all safe en soun', de tears come. . . . En all you wuz thinkin' 'bout wuz how you could make a fool uv old Jim wid a lie. Dat truck dah is *trash*; en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er day fren's en makes 'em ashamed." (83-84)

Huck tells us that it took him fifteen minutes before he could go and "humble myself to a nigger" but he did it and was glad of it (Twain 84).

Huck has, however, not learned as much as we might wish, and in the very next chapter he contemplates going ashore and reporting Jim. But as he is about to leave, Jim tells him that he is the best friend he has ever had and the only "white genlman" who ever kept his promise to him. Huck is certainly not accustomed to being called a gentleman! His feeling for Jim quickly overcomes his intentions, and he lies to keep Jim from falling into the hands of white men who are searching for runaway slaves.

It is precisely the recollection of the scene just described which leads Huck to his decision much later in the novel to tear up the letter he has written Miss Watson about where Jim is. His conscience insists that he must tell on Jim, that he is risking hell itself by not doing so: "There was the Sunday school, you could 'a' gone to it; and if you'd 'a' done it they'd 'a' learnt you there that people that acts as I'd been acting about that nigger goes to everlasting fire" (205). But when he remembers all the kind things Jim has done for him on their journey down the river, he says, "I couldn't seem to strike no places to harden me against him, but only the other kind" (206). Small wonder that he tears up his letter to Miss Watson, saying, "All right, then, I'll *go* to hell" (206). He further resolves to "steal Jim out of slavery" (206). His heart has won out over his deformed conscience; he cannot betray so good a friend. His maturity has reached its highest point.

In the last section of the novel, which so many critics have found a mistake or, as a Twain character might say, "a pretty lame come-off," we might wish that Huck had been a little better friend to Jim and put Tom Sawyer in his place rather than cooperating in his romantic, book-inspired scheme to free a man who is already free. It has seemed to many a reader that Huck's gradual moral development here takes an unfortunate turn. Most modern adaptations cut short the happenings at the Phelps Farm, sparing Jim many of the unnecessary hardships and risks Tom subjects him to.

At the end the quests for freedom prove successful. Jim finds his freedom when he learns that he is a slave no more, set free in Miss Watson's will—however unlikely that might seem. As for Huck, his quest for freedom leads him to reject the "blessings of civilization" which Aunt Sally Phelps offers him. He did not like the Widow Douglas and Miss Watson's brand of civilization, and he does not believe he would like Aunt Sally's any better. Accordingly, he must "light out for the Territory" (281). In terms of the story, in terms of the sequel Twain planned, it is the Indian Territory, now part of Oklahoma, that Huck means, but readers have liked to give it a broader interpretation.

At the end the quests for freedom prove successful. . . . Now, what of the quest for maturity in *The Wind in the Willows*?

Now, what of the quest for maturity in *The Wind in the Willows*? The quester, or the one who should be questing, is of course Mr. Toad, that irresponsible, irrepressible, egotistical, lovable defier of convention as well as the laws of the land—a description which in some ways fits Huck Finn pretty well. Toad's emphasis has distinctly been on freedom rather than on responsibility. Again and again we have seen Toad act quite foolishly and immaturely. When he wants something, he has to have it. Toad is capable of all sorts of things, including stealing and deceit, in order to indulge his cravings. And he is given to unconscionable boasting about his exploits, boasting which is likely to take the form of laudatory speeches and songs. His friends Rat, Mole, and Badger decide early on to "take him in hand." Toad's friends really like him, we see. They don't want to abandon him or see him make a fool of himself. Badger lays it on the line to him:

> "You've disregarded all the warnings we've given you . . . and you're getting us animals a bad name in the district by your furious driving and your smashes and your rows with the police. Independence is all very well, but we animals never allow our friends to make fools of themselves beyond a certain limit; and that limit you've reached" (91).

The reformation of Toad, his maturing, is not an easy process.

The reformation of Toad, his maturing, is not an easy process. Toad really seems to have an addiction to motorcars, adventure, and bragging, and shortly after his friends' intervention, he escapes from them, steals a car, says cheeky things to the police, and winds up sentenced to twenty years in prison. Toad's escape is like something from one of the romantic novels Tom Sawyer was so fond of reading. Like Huck, Toad disguises himself as a female, and like Huck he gets caught at it because his act is not sufficiently convincing. "I've been watching you all the time," says the barge-woman. "I thought you must be a humbug all along. . . . Pretty washerwoman you are! Never washed so much as a dishcloth in your life, I'll lay!" (167) Toad and Huck are both, I might add, highly adept at manufacturing elaborate lies on short notice.

As the narrative nears its end, Toad's fortunes have reached their lowest point. His ancestral home, Toad Hall, has been invaded and taken over by the weasels and stoats. Toad's friends do not desert him in this crisis. Despite all their misgivings about some of his conduct, they want to help their friend regain what is rightfully his, and, under Badger's leadership, they do, just as Ulysses routed the suitors of Penelope who had moved into his house in Ithaca.

It is interesting to note the narration of the retaking of Toad Hall. Badger, Rat, Mole, and Toad are once described as "the four Heroes" and again as "the four Friends." Toad here seems on equal footing with the others, and he gains more stature afterwards, when the narrator says: "Toad, like the gentleman he was, put all his jealousy from him, and said heartily, 'Thank you kindly, dear Mole, for all your pains and trouble to-night, and especially for your cleverness this morning!' The Badger was pleased at that, and said, 'There spoke my brave Toad!'" (216) It is perhaps as striking to hear the narrator apply the word "gentleman" to Toad as it was to hear Jim call Huck a "gentleman." Neither had often merited that distinction before.

Even so, just as Huck found it so hard to cast off all his prejudice against a black man, Toad still has aspirations of seizing the spotlight to make conceited speeches and to sing egotistical songs. He does sing what is called "Toad's Last Little Song," but he sings it for an imaginary audience only. When the audience does arrive, Toad surprises those who know him by his modesty, as he tells them: "Badger's was the mastermind; the Mole and the Water Rat bore the brunt of fighting; I merely served in the ranks and did little or nothing" (223). It is a truthful assessment, but hardly what we would have expected from the Toad we have known through most of the book. Invited to speak and to sing, Toad respectfully declines. We have to agree with the narrator's verdict: "He was indeed an altered Toad!" (224). The book's final image is of "the friends," as the narrator calls them, strolling together in the Wild Wood, pointed at with awe by all who see them.

Did Toad really reform? Was he really "an altered Toad" or was he only pretending? In the Walt Disney cartoon he does not change. His experiences have taught him nothing at all; he simply abandons his motorcar enthusiasm to find a new delight in the airplane, and we see him buzzing Trafalgar Square, doing a bit of damage to the statue of Lord Nelson in the process. It is the same old irresponsible, irrepressible, immature Toad.

A. A. Milne preceded Disney in his skepticism about the genuineness of Toad's reformation. In the play *Toad of Toad Hall,* Toad sings to the assembled group the song which he sang only to himself in the book. His friends are appalled at his conduct, and Mole declares that they will talk to him in the morning, only to have Rat respond, "Talking's no good to Toad. He'll always come back to what he is." Despite this negative verdict, in a few moments first Mole, then Rat, and finally even Badger become caught up in the singing and dancing, as the verses go on relating what happened "When the Toad came home."

Apparently Disney and Milne thought an unreformed Toad would be more acceptable to their audiences. For one thing, a cartoon and a play may need a comic ending more than a novel does. Such a figure as Disney's Toad would be more like the Huck who plans to light out for the territory in order to avoid having to conform to the ways of civilized society. Perhaps I am reading *The Wind in the Willows* too seriously here, but it appears to me that the ending says that Toad has really reformed, and that such reformation is a part of maturity, a maturity which he could not have achieved without the support—and love, we may say—of his three friends: the Mole, the Rat, and the Badger.

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DISCOVERING CONNECTIONS IN CLUSTER GROUPS

At the close of the three-week summer institute, follow-up activities are designed to strengthen connections that begin during the workshop. Clusters, the major follow-up activity, are created by grouping participants in common geographical areas and assigning each a mentor. These cluster groups meet twice during the academic year, and connections often grow into bonds. A good example is the 1988 South Carolina group. Four years after its inception, under the mentoring of Dean Thompson, the discussion group still meets regularly.

During the 1990-91 academic year, mentors chose widely differing topics for cluster-group discussion. Some extended the material initially discussed in the institute. For example, at one meeting, Jed Bierhaus focused on "the outsider" in *The Hobbit*. Other mentors introduced new materials and "connected" them to the study of fantasy. Charles Mayo presented the article, "The Day Our Children Disappear: Predictions of a Media Ecologist"; Jeff Danny Marion explored the work of Nancy Willard and George Ella Lyon, as well as his own *Hello Crow*.

John Lang and the Virginia cluster group explored the work of two authors: Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* and Fred Chappell's *Midquest* and *I Am One of You Forever*. As an example of the types of connections that are made in the cluster-group discussions, John Lang's essay is included below. It integrates modern fiction, fantasy, myth, and the great oral tradition as interpreted by Joseph Campbell. In short, it emphasizes the exact point that the institute hopes to instill in readers of all ages: pursuit of the infinite connections among all literature sets us upon the path to wisdom and wholeness. The overview by cluster-group member Jo Ann Hess is testimony to the efficacy of these groups and their mentors.

One Cluster Group Member Speaks

by

Jo Ann Hess

The mentor for the Virginia Cluster Group was John Lang, an English professor at Emory & Henry College, Emory, Virginia. He proved to be a genuine teacher and leader for our group and provided a particular book and various other readings several months before each meeting. The participants then had ample time to read the material and prepare for an intelligent discussion at the meeting. In other words, we did not just meet with nothing in mind to discuss; we had a plan. Also, the writers we read were unfamiliar to us, so we gained some knowledge of them.

We read Fred Chappell's *I Am One of You Forever* and some of his poems. Dr. Lang pointed out the strong sense of sorrow in Chappell's writings and compared that to a part in *The Power of Myth* where Joseph Campbell states, "mortality is the prime condition of life." Lang also stressed the virtue of compassion in both Chappell and Campbell.

For the second cluster group meeting we read and discussed Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*. Her literary work uses fantasy elements and raises issues of identity, sexism, and racism. Morrison uses the lack of identity for emphasis, and her characters are out of the ordinary.

I think that cluster groups derive more from meetings when a well-organized plan is available and maintained; then everyone can contribute to the discussions and learn. The Virginia Cluster Group had a leader as mentor.

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"All the Bright Magic of a Fairy Tale": Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*

by

John Lang

As the mentor for the Virginia and Northeast Tennessee Cluster Group, I asked the teachers with whom I was working to read two contemporary American novels: Fred Chappell's *I Am One of You Forever* (1985) and Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* (1977). The former, set in Appalachia, we read for our fall meeting. The latter, set initially in Michigan but with its climactic events occurring in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, we discussed at our spring meeting. Both books are written for adult audiences, and both make significant use of elements of myth, folk tale, and fantasy. They thus seemed to me to offer exciting possibilities for teachers interested in building upon the experiences they had had in the fantasy literature institute.

Since I've already discussed Chappell's novel, if only briefly, in the January 1990 issue of *Road to Wonderful*, I'll limit most of my remarks on this occasion to *Song of Solomon*. For the group's discussion of both these books, however, Joseph Campbell's *The Power of Myth* provided a number of helpful glosses, in part because Campbell's work illuminates so many dimensions of the human experience. His comments on the hero's journey, for example, are particularly pertinent to *Song of Solomon*, whose central character, the oddly named Milkman Dead, travels from the North to the South—and from the personal present into his family's past—to discover his identity. What begins for Milkman as a search for a missing fortune in gold gradually becomes a quest for community and for spiritual transcendence.

According to Campbell, the hero is the person who ceases to think primarily about self and self-preservation, who develops the capacity for empathy and compassion. "The ultimate aim of the quest," Campbell writes, "must be neither release nor ecstasy for oneself, but the wisdom and the power to serve others" (xv). Morrison's novel traces just such a process of moral and spiritual growth. Moreover, its principal image, the motif of flying, draws upon a variety of myths and folk tales that mirror humanity's age-old longing for freedom and transcendence. For Morrison, an Afro-American writer, Gullah folk tales of slaves who escaped bondage by flying back to Africa are the chief source of this metaphor in *Song of Solomon*. In fact, on the literal level, the novel's title refers to a children's song Milkman hears, a song that serves as a clue to his family's past, his racial heritage, and his personal spiritual potential. That song, part of a long oral tradition, records the actual flight of Milkman's great-grandfather, Solomon, back to his African homeland. Like fairy tales and folk tales themselves, that song is an example of oral literature. To profit from it, Milkman must acknowledge the wisdom and power of what is often, in a highly literate civilization, either devalued or ignored.

John Lang, professor of American Literature at Emory & Henry College, Emory, Virginia, teaches courses in nineteenth- and twentieth-century American writers, including Southern and Appalachian authors. He has published essays on William Styron, Wendell Berry, Fred Chappell, Ernest Gaines, James Alan McPherson, and John Ehle. An essay on Robert Morgan is forthcoming in *Shenandoah*.

What Campbell says of myth is equally relevant to the folk tale around which Morrison builds *Song of Solomon*. "The images of myth," Campbell claims, "are reflections of the spiritual potentialities of every one of us. Through contemplating these we evoke their power in our own lives" (217-18). Certainly one of the effects of reading Morrison's novel is to feel the world enlarge. The Milkman Dead whom the reader encounters in the first two-thirds of the book is incredibly self-centered—and remains so till the age of thirty-two. He acts as if other people exist only to satisfy **his** needs. This is especially true of the women in his life. "Never had he thought of his mother," Morrison writes, "as a person, a separate individual, with a life apart from allowing or interfering with his own" (75). He is equally indifferent to political realities such as the brutal lynching of Emmet Till. This Milkman is largely a product of his father's insistence that "the one important thing [he'll] ever need to know" is to "own things." "And let the things you own own other things. Then you'll own yourself and other people too," his father declares (55).

One of the effects of reading Morrison's novel is to feel the world enlarge.

Over against Milkman's egocentricity and his father's materialism, Morrison sets the humane values of Milkman's aunt Pilate, his father's sister. As her name obliquely suggests, it is Pilate (pilot) who will help teach Milkman to fly, who will nurture in him the qualities of love and sympathy and wonder. Pilate herself is a mysterious figure whom Morrison endows with attributes that place Pilate outside the boundaries of strict literary realism. She has, for instance, no navel—a physical trait that helps reinforce her quasi-supernatural powers. It is Pilate's magic potion that leads to Milkman's conception, and it is Pilate's voodoo doll that prevents Milkman's father from aborting the baby. In addition, she frequently converses with her dead father's ghost, whose words, "You can't just fly off and leave a body," not only bear witness to his own abandonment by Solomon but also testify to the novel's theme of responsibility to others. Morrison describes Pilate as "a natural healer" and comments on "her alien's compassion for troubled people" (149-50). Pilate's house, unlike Milkman's, "achieve[s] comfort without one article of comfort in it. . . . But peace was there, energy, singing" (304).

Above all else, Pilate is love's representative. The novel's title, *Song of Solomon*, echoes that of the Old Testament book noted for its celebration of human love. The biblical Song of Solomon contains such statements as "love is strong as death" and "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it" (8: 6, 7). Throughout the novel Pilate embodies love—and the related qualities of compassion, forgiveness, and mercy. Thus, Milkman's paradoxical claim in the book's closing pages ultimately convinces the reader: "Without ever leaving the ground she [Pilate] could fly" (340).

In addition to her characterization of Pilate and her use of this motif of flying, Morrison employs a number of other devices that depend on fantasy, myth, and folklore. In fact, *Song of Solomon* has sometimes been linked to the "magic realism" of such twentieth-century Latin American novels as Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. In magic realism the fantastic and the realistic intermingle, though realism remains the foundation of the work. In Morrison's novel, for instance, the author explores the harsh realities of American racism as well as her protagonist's moral and psychological development. She does so, however, amidst various references to fairy tales (Hansel and Gretel, Jack and the Beanstalk, Rumpelstiltskin), folk tales, and myths. As A. Leslie Harris remarks, Morrison "blends the natural with the supernatural and the historically factual with the fantastic" (70). Such an amalgam expands the reader's sense of what is possible not only in literature but in life. According to Campbell, this enlargement of vision is one of the main functions of myth—as it is of fantasy. The power of imagination reminds us of the fluidity of all established forms, their openness to change. Its message is the human capacity for transformation, whether personal or social. It witnesses to possibility. The impact of Morrison's use of magic realist techniques parallels the power Campbell ascribes to myth. In Campbell's words, "It is important to live life with the experience, and therefore the knowledge, of its mystery and of your own mystery. This gives life a new radiance" (163).

The power of imagination reminds us of the fluidity of all established forms, their openness to change.

Song of Solomon creates a similar sense of mystery when the reader encounters Circe, an ancient Black woman who is well over one hundred years old, a character whose name recalls the witch-goddess of Homer's *Odyssey*. In another episode, Milkman's life-long limp suddenly disappears after he spends a night in a Virginia forest on a coon hunt, an adventure that culminates in the shooting of a bobcat. Milkman barely escapes death on this occasion—not from the bobcat but at the hands of his best friend Guitar, who mistakenly believes that Milkman has found the missing gold and is trying to keep it all for himself. This hunt is a ritual of initiation with mythic overtones. It resembles the boar hunt in *The Odyssey* from which Odysseus acquires the scar that proves his identity upon his return to Ithaca. As Campbell writes about this mythic motif of entering the forest, it reveals "forces and powers and magical possibilities of life" (92).

Thanks to Pilate's example and Milkman's growing awareness of his need for community, the story Morrison tells is one of affirmation and hope. As Morrison has said, "all artists have either to bear witness or effect change, improvement—take cataracts off people's eyes." "Novels are important," she adds, "because they are socially responsible" (145). Though such claims may not apply to every novel or novelist, they do hold true for *Song of Solomon*. That, I believe, is one of the reasons why the members of my cluster group found the book so intriguing. It was relevant both to their studies at Journey Through Fantasy Literature and to their experiences and values as individuals.

Nearly forty years ago, when accepting the National Book Award for *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison spoke of his search for "a novel unburdened by narrow naturalism" and his desire to produce "a prose which was flexible and swift as American change is swift, confronting the inequalities and brutalities of our society forthrightly, but yet thrusting forth its images of hope, human fraternity, and individual self-realization." "There must be possible," he continued, "a fiction which . . . can arrive at the truth about the human condition, here and now, with all the bright magic of a fairy tale" (113). Substitute the word "realism" for "naturalism" in Ellison's statement, and one has the credo by which Morrison herself seems to write. Like Alice Walker's *The Temple of My Familiar*, Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*, and Tina Ansa's *Baby of the Family*, *Song of Solomon* avoids strict literary realism. And like Ellison's novel, it celebrates life's possibilities despite the deplorable—and ongoing—history of American racism. Toni Morrison is among the very best novelists now writing in this country. All of her novels, but especially *Song of Solomon*, owe much of their imaginative power to her creative use of myth, fantasy, and folklore. She does indeed spin bright magic.

Song of Solomon owes much of its imaginative power to Morrison's creative use of myth, fantasy, and folklore.

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◆

> *Fantasy, by its power to move us so deeply,*
> *to dramatize, even melodramatize, morality,*
> *can be one of the most effective means of*
> *establishing a capacity for adult values.*
> *—Lloyd Alexander*

THREADS OF BRIGHT MAGIC

Throughout the summer, Journey Through Fantasy Literature spun its own bright magic as seen in these photographs.

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II

Schopenhauer concludes . . . it is as though our lives were the features of the one great dream of a single dreamer in which all the dream characters dream, too.

—Campbell, The Power of Myth

During the institute, several themes were emphasized as vehicles for making connections: friendship, the quest, the hero, sacrifice, *memento mori*, freedom, identity, and self. Three of these—friendship, the hero, and *memento mori*—appeared more frequently in discussion and writing than others, and so they are the focal points of this chapter.

Friendship—its nurturing and its value—is a natural theme running through all of the major pieces of literature discussed. It is present not only in the fantasy literature, but also among the participants, their students, and the authors we studied. J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, for example, were two men bound in their friendship as well as their fantasy creations. Fred Norris's review of A. N. Wilson's 1990 *C. S. Lewis: A Biography* addresses the friendhip among Lewis' World War I compatriots. Accompanying Norris' essay on Lewis is a combination of participant essays and student work regarding the friendships in *Charlotte's Web* and *The Wind in the Willows.*

A fitting introduction to the hero section is Philip Lowe's poem "The Hero," which identifies the classic heroic motif. Bonny Stanley's essay, "Narnia and Druid's Grove: How Children Can Become Heroes in Wartime," reminds us that this pattern is not limited to adult males. Jack Higgs provides a sort of heroic alphabet—the characteristics of heroes through the ages. Jeff Gold's essay, "The Heroic Transformation of Bilbo Baggins," addresses the three metaphors for spiritual evolution—the journey, the battle, and the awakening.

A striking feature in these discussions of friendship and heroism is the strong theme of battle and strife running throughout. Norris's essay on friendship is ultimately about World War I; Stanley's essay focuses on children in wartime; Higgs's list of heroic characteristics presupposes struggle and battle as the core; Gold's essay hinges on the battle metaphor as the element through which one achieves enlightenment. Even the children's original work included in this section speaks of struggle and death—"Dear Diary" and "The Mystery of the Golden Locket" are about the power of friendship and objects to transcend the grave; the poem "The Hero" ends with the hero's death; many of the cinquains and haiku focus on the mutability of life.

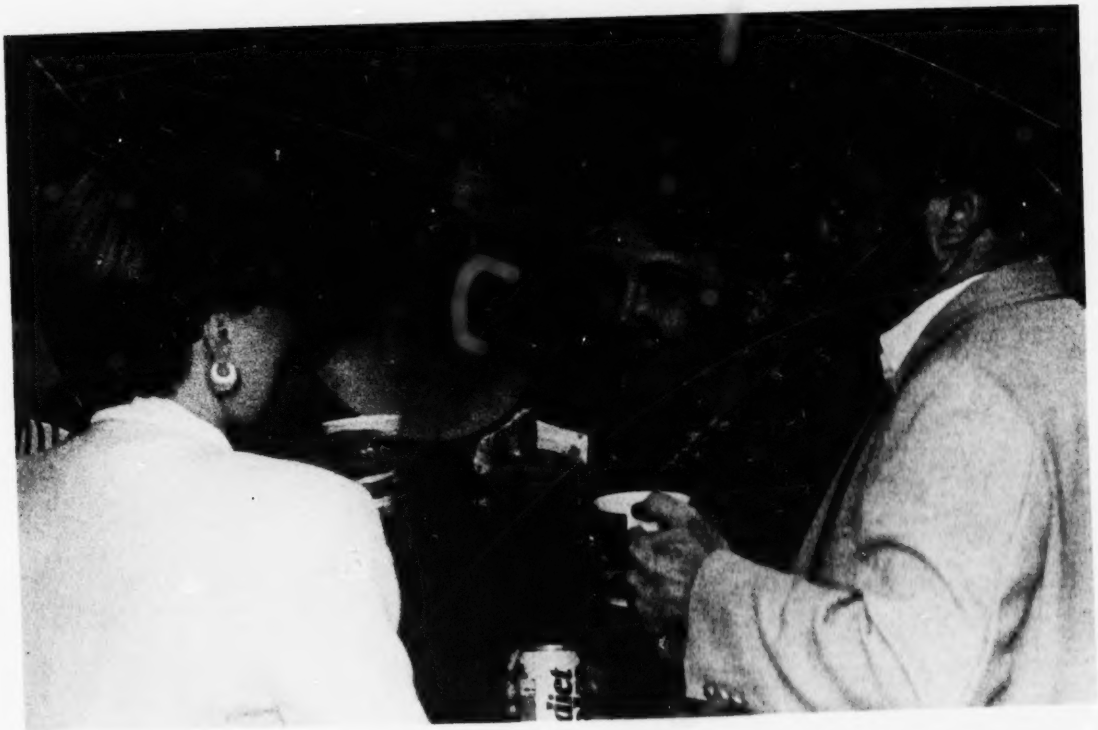
It is only logical, I suppose, that any discussion of the hero involve conflict and war as well as death. But what does all this suggest about the themes of friendship, heroism, and death in children's fantasy? Perhaps it suggests, as Sharp's essay "E. B. White and Children's Tragedy" points out, that much of children's fantasy is tragic—after all, even *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, amid its cosy fantasy, reveals the bitter truth of Peter's father's death. Perhaps it suggests that amid life's battles, we learn that life is a losable item and, accordingly, elevate friendship as the one stay against this knowledge.

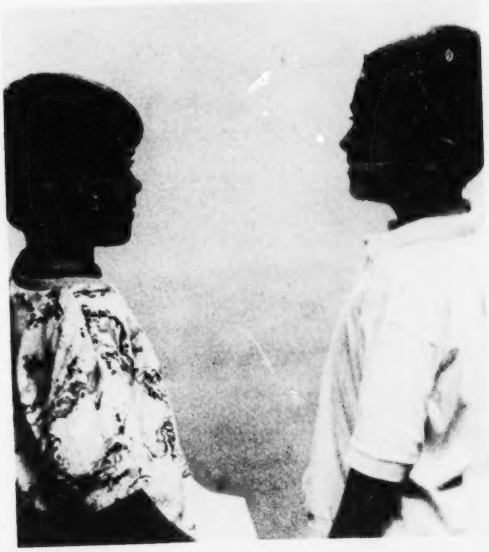
RTH

You have been my friend and that in itself is a tremendous thing.

—White, Charlotte's Web

FRIENDSHIP





Not So Good Friends

by
April Akers

Frog was rich and
Toad was old,

Frog had silver and
Toad had gold,

The Frog was stingy,
and the Toad blew
his money.

The Toad died poor
and the Frog stayed
rich as honey.

In 1990-91, April was a second-grade student in Robbin S. Nuckolls' class at Elliston-Lafayette Elementary School in Elliston, Virginia. "Not So Good Friends" won first place in the second- through fourth-grade division of the poetry competition at the Fantasy Fair.

Fantasy and Biography

by
Frederick W. Norris

Perhaps the muses hate a vacuum; at least one is now partially filled. A. N. Wilson has written a well-regarded biography entitled *C. S. Lewis*. In important ways Wilson, a former Oxford lecturer with deep literary sensitivity, has done himself and Lewis, the Oxford don, proud. The great debate about Lewis has included two extremes: those who would debunk Lewis as a misguided Christian populizer, indeed finally a beaten man of unbelief, and those who would honor him as a Christian monk with virtues worthy of a prohibitionist eunuch. In Wilson's skilled hands, Lewis appears neither as a plastic saint suited for American Christian taste-free admiration nor as a failed academic who chose unacademic topics and died confused. Both views are false; Wilson savages each.

The C. S. Lewis whom Wilson gives us is the red-faced, hard-drinking, long-walking old bachelor (later married man) who at an early age began to despise the church and only went back into Christianity kicking and scratching. Wilson traces Lewis' often odd attempt at a rationalistic apologetic for Christianity, a project that avoided the reasons behind Lewis' own conversion, took up much of his writing and all of his time in the famed Socratic Club of Oxford, exposed some of his pomposity, and died at the hands of G. E. M. Anscombe, a philosopher and Christian. Wilson emphasizes that Lewis literally and literarily abandoned that full project in the 1950s and began the *Chronicles of Narnia*. Yet at the same time Wilson admires the creativity of *The Screwtape Letters* or the gritty belief and literary power of *A Grief Observed*. He criticizes and praises the literary legacy and makes the simple yet never simplistic Christian faith of Lewis live.

One set of issues in Wilson's biography, however, strikes me as distorted because of his inattention to detail and his lack of imagination which led to a superficial look into Lewis' motives. Freudian psychological categories concerning sex as the great drive within human endeavor may not be why so much that is human happens as it does. Wilson describes Lewis' relationship with Mrs. Moore as one of sexual passion. He takes the haunting vagary of Lewis' autobiography; the letters that have pages destroyed by Arthur Greeves; the reminiscences of Maureen, Mrs. Moore's daughter; and Mrs. Moore's destruction of correspondence with Lewis to put the burden of proof on any who would suggest that Lewis did not have an affair with Mrs. Moore. According to Wilson the two were in love and consummated their desires. Her husband was not dead; he had left her. And Lewis cared for her, in fact lived with her, after her son's death until her own demise over thirty years later.

The point here is not to defend Lewis as a Christian ascetic; he was no monk. He described his response to virtues when he went up to Oxford at eighteen as reminiscent of a baboon listening to classical music. Yet other nuances and imaginative constructions can form an interpretive framework for speculating about the hole in the evidence. Wilson himself concedes that nothing proves the affair. Carpenter thinks it did not occur. The beauty or the beast will be in the eye of the beholder.

First, those who write about their own lives always suppress some aspects of them; Lewis refers to an unusual silence that may seem odd to a knowing reader of his *Surprised by Joy*, but the words are not colorful enough to create a picture. Second, to have a friend like Arthur Greeves who destroyed parts of the most personal letters, and thus made the task of the

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biographer impossible in this instance, frustrates the historian. But to envision friends who protect each other's confidences to the point of burning primary evidence is to remember an age in which friendship was more important than baring every detail. Greeves knew that he was for Lewis a confessor, and we do not know what events he protected. His sense of honor suggested that such personal confessions are never public property. In our own age when people without permission use personal correspondence as public domain, we could learn more than a bit from Greeves. Such friendship and honor could cover more than sexual affairs.

Those who write about their own lives always suppress some aspects of them.

Third, the memories of a young daughter, ones of her mother's and Lewis' agitation to get her out of the house so that they could be alone, may be clear but not necessarily well interpreted. A coin for the movies might be a way to have an afternoon of sexual pleasure, but intimate moments without a child's wiggling limbs and spying ears could be used for needed conversation. Fourth, Mrs. Moore's destruction of her letters to and from Lewis may have sprung from many motives, given the complexity of the woman herself. All destroyed correspondence between a man and a woman need not cover sexual dalliance.

The major failing of this portion of Wilson's account is that he never gives the oath that led Lewis to Mrs. Moore its due. No special gift of fantasy or empathy is needed to think about how the two got together. Although Paddy Moore and "Jack" Lewis had not known each other long at Oxford, it was there that Lewis had met Mrs. Moore and the sister, Maureen. Paddy, the young son, had made a friend in Jack; Lewis had few friends. The two young men entered a pact that if either died in World War I, the other would look after the grieving parent. Wilson can employ the horrid experiences of war to explain Lewis' "cult of the ordinary," but he cannot free his fantasy from Freud's sexual vision to see the cloud of death that hung over all these young eighteen-year-olds as they contemplated the front lines.

World War I's carnage left the possibility that many such vows like those between Jack Lewis and Paddy Moore needed attention even before the fighting ceased. Lewis was wounded April 15, 1917. By May he was back in England, Paddy had been declared missing and Mrs. Moore was coming to see Jack. According to Wilson's timetable, Lewis and Mrs. Moore were lovers at least by the summer of 1918 only to find out in September of that year that Paddy was dead.

Some troubling relationship was passed over in Lewis' autobiography. But nearly any important study of culture after a war would remind us that those who participated were never the same afterward. In the United States, perhaps the prevailing metaphor would be Vietnam veterans. How do they feel about each other or the pacts that they made? The friendship that brought about the death oath between Lewis and Moore was the one which also brought Mrs. Moore to Lewis; even in a Freudian interpretation it is not clear that feelings and memories of war and death, of friendship and vows, would necessarily lead a wounded and recovering soldier to a sexual relationship with his friend's mother. It borders on the bizarre that young Lewis, who swore an oath to his comrade, could be making love to that friend's mother under the cloak of Paddy being missing and presumed dead. Stranger things have happened in human life, but more evidence is needed to bolster Wilson's interpretation. Furthermore, the way in which Mrs. Moore continued to treat Lewis as another maid, as someone to meet her ruling whims, does not suggest passionate lovers.

We do not know if Mrs. Moore and Lewis consummated their relationship sexually; if we do not find new evidence we will never know. The burden of proof is on any who claim that their speculation destroys a different view. Yet the Freudian interpretation, so readily accepted by Wilson, shows that even this master of literature and biography had too dwarfed a sense of fantasy, made too quick an imaginative leap toward one interpretation without considering a twenty-year-old war veteran who swore to care for his compatriot's family. In fact Wilson's interest in Lewis' sexuality led him to an egregious error. He claims that Douglas Gresham remembered catching his mother Joy and C. S. in a compromising position in her bedroom well before the two were married. But Martindale, who has read the transcript of the interview with Douglas, says that it has no such statement. Indeed Wilson only spent a few hours at the Lewis collection of Wheaton College and thus did not do its primary sources justice.

Biographers must not allow their minds to create fantasy material to support their interpretations. Obviously writing biography demands careful checking of sources, but it also may require as supple an imagination as writing fantasy. There is no little irony in Wilson's major weakness being his captivity to Freudian models which Lewis himself so despised.

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Friendship

by

Edythe R. Green

The magical, ethereal qualities of friendship are too abstract for our language to capture. Perhaps this is why writers such as E. B. White and Kenneth Grahame defined friendship through examples. We are fortunate that they chose the genre of fantasy literature. The legacies of these remarkable men have entertained and spiritually enriched the lives of generations of children and adults.

In a simple barnyard setting, E. B. White developed what has become a model of friendship. In *Charlotte's Web* he shows what Aristotle would call the "perfect friendship"—one that is useful and pleasurable. Two incongruous characters, a spider and a pig, teach us that friendship leads to maturity when we can put the welfare of others above that of ourselves. The crusty and bossy spider watches Wilbur and decides to use her poetic abilities to save the pig from being slaughtered. Her only reason is, "I weave my web because I like you." Charlotte makes the whimpering pig feel good about himself. He returns the favor when he recognizes her sacrifice and cares for her offspring. Just as Professor Higgins brought Eliza Doolittle to maturity in *Pygmalion*, Charlotte wove a plan to give Wilbur the confidence he needed.

Kenneth Grahame chose a more complex paradigm of friendship in *The Wind in the Willows*. His main characters, Rat and Mole, have more extended adventures, but the outcome is the same. The authoritative river rat brings the reticent mole to maturity by urging him to taste of life. Mole, on the other hand, returns the favor when he stops Rat from following the wayfaring rat. Like Wilbur, Mole becomes a stronger character. The difference is that the death of Charlotte forces Wilbur to grow up and experience Joseph Campbell's "quiet within." Mole and his mentor are allowed to continue their friendship and share a spiritual moment when they are mesmerized by the god Pan.

Both stories have an added dimension in characters who are not true friends to anyone. Templeton, the rat in *Charlotte's Web*, could be compared to Toad in *The Wind in the Willows*. These two seem to be examples of "takers" who have problems forming friendships. Perhaps the authors were showing us what friendship is **not.**

Ralph Waldo Emerson said two ingredients are necessary for true friendship—truth and tenderness. Add the quality of acceptance and we have a formula used by both Grahame and White. In defining friendship through these stories, the authors have made it possible for us to say, "I can't always explain it, but I know it when I see it."

Edythe teaches ninth-grade English at Boiling Springs High School in Spartanburg, South Carolina. She has a master's degree in secondary reading from the University of South Carolina, Spartanburg.

Making the Difference

by
Paula Morrow

The question of whether Templeton would have been different if he had known a friend like Charlotte kept replaying itself in my mind all day Friday. Then I turned on a television talk show in which the topic was people growing up without friends. The discussion reaffirmed what I thought I knew: friends, or the lack of them, have a powerful influence on one's life. Friendship becomes even more powerful when we realize that it is not the destination that counts; it is the journey—the journey through life. A journey taken without someone to share in it can be lonely.

Aristotle has named the highest order of friendship perfect; Buber named it the "thou" type of friendship. Thoreau in revising *The Writing of a Week on the Concord and Merrimack River* changed the "I" and "thou" to "we" to underscore the unity of friends. In *The Wind in the Willows* Kenneth Grahame simply created a relationship between two characters, Ratty and Mole, to stand for the highest form of friendship.

Ratty and Mole represent the personification of true friendship. They have a quiet gentility that Emerson would have liked, for it is based on true tenderness. In my mind, the river setting, with its continuity and its peacefulness, is the perfect place for Ratty and Mole's friendship to grow. Friendship has a peace about it like nature, a peace that leads to happiness. I agree with Montaigne when he says that the secret to happiness is to build a "congenial monotony." Ratty and Mole have that monotony or sameness as only an enduring friendship can.

Had I not read *The Wind in the Willows*, and seen the friendship between Ratty and Mole, I might view only Charlotte and Wilbur, characters in *Charlotte's Web*, as the best example of friendship. In forming their friendship, Charlotte examines Wilbur and likes what she sees. She offers Wilbur what might have been only a friendship of pleasure. For Wilbur it could have been a utility friendship—a means to an end—or in this case, a means not to an end. But as their relationship deepens and takes on meaning, it fills a need in each of them that allows the other to grow. Charlotte helps Wilbur become "Some Pig," and in turn, she becomes as White says, "a good writer and a true friend."

Certainly in both *Charlotte's Web* and *The Wind in the Willows* we see examples of the utility type of friendship. Templeton becomes an assistant in both Wilbur's and Charlotte's plans. Toad uses acquaintances to get what he wants, like the thrill of showing off a new motorboat or of escaping from a bad situation. Even in the end I think Toad finds a way to use Ratty and Mole to achieve the attention and notoriety that he wants.

Friendships of pleasure sound almost negative, but they are positive in all lives. Fern and Wilbur give each other pleasure, and it is good for both. Otter enjoys the company of Ratty and Mole, and there is great pleasure when Badger comes to call.

Three pairs of friends in other books we have read during the institute continue to haunt me. I think they are special because they are searching for self and identity. In *The Hobbit* Gandalf encourages Bilbo on his search for self; he assists him and allows him to succeed. In the end they enjoy a

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comfortable friendship. In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* Jim and Huck form a special bond. They bring out the best in each other, a naive kind of trust in Jim and a realization of values in Huck. Finally, in *The Little Prince* the last of the special friends are the Little Prince and the fox. The Little Prince really doesn't know what he is looking for, but he finds in the fox a friend who wants for the first time to be tamed. The fox in his friendship with the Little Prince comes to know the sound of a step that is different from the others. These three pairs of friends are examples of not only being loved, but being loved for what they are aspiring to be.

During the institute I read a phrase about friendship in Thoreau's *Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, which I'll always remember: "While we sail here we can remember without reserve and without interruption the friends who dwell far away—who *people* the world for us." For me, those who "people" my world make me who I am. For example, there's David who reminds me of my favored traditions; Kathleen who loves her impaired child unconditionally; Carlton who lives life with humor; my family who anchors me; Sarah who remains constant; and now Ruth and Sharon with whom I share so much. For as these special ones "people my world" in unique ways, so does Gandalf for Bilbo, Aslan for Lucy, the pond for Thoreau, and the fox for the Little Prince. Those in life and in fiction who people our worlds add an extra dimension for us to enjoy.

Friendship

by

Bonnie Farrar

In *Charlotte's Web* and *The Wind in the Willows* we find examples of extended definitions of friendship—associates, companions, acquaintances, allies, chums, all words synonymous with "friend." But we also find more. The friendship between Wilbur and Charlotte began as a friendship of utility when Charlotte, in order to find some peace and quiet, said to the young Wilbur, "I'll be your friend." This friendship then progressed to a friendship of pleasure when Charlotte enjoyed the flies that hovered around Wilbur's food.

Neither of these types of friendship was enough to make this book worthy of reading. It is the perfect friendship that Charlotte shows when she puts aside her own posterity to be a defender of Wilbur, a friend for all times. This is what makes me read this book every year. This is what keeps the interest of the most cynical reader. This friendship that each of us seeks as our own is the element that makes the book great!

What about *The Wind in the Willows*? Is the friendship theme as poignant? Is it so obvious to the reader? Actually, there are several different friendships depicted in this book. The most obvious one is the relationship that develops when Mole leaves his home and seeks adventure. He meets Rat, who immediately extends his hand of friendship. Rat teaches, guides, encourages and loves Mole through the periods of his maturity. Rat and Mole are best friends. They share the ups and downs. They allow each other to be free yet they love enough to protect the other from himself as Mole did when Ratty wanted to follow the siren song of Sea Rat.

But there is another strong friendship in *The Wind in the Willows*: the friendship of Toad and Badger. It is Badger who lets Toad have "enough

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rope to hang himself" and then steps in to catch him just as the trap door is sprung. Badger is Toad's rock, his stabilizing force. However, this friendship is secondary in my mind and it would not have been enough for me to read this book. Yes, I know most people dwell on Toad's adventures, but to me the strength of this book is the friendship of Ratty and Mole.

If I choose to use these books with my students, what will they learn from them? What have I learned from them? For my students they will open up the avenue of realization that all friendships are not "perfect." They will be able to draw comparisons between Wilbur's grabbiness and his generosity. They will be able to discover that friendships grow and develop. Hopefully, they will realize that perfect friendship is a goal to be obtained but that it takes real **work** on the part of both partners

From *The Wind in the Willows* they will be able to learn that there are many kinds of friendship and will see that they need all kinds to be a whole person. They need the friend who is always there as well as the friend who is just a fleeting acquaintance across the "stage of life."

What have I learned about friendship? To sum it up I've learned not only by studying these books, but by "studying" the people in our class, that the quote in Proverbs is true. "A friend does love at all times."

❧

Four Friends

by

Joey Hager

There once was a Mole,
And Rat was his friend.
Mole was good and kind,
And he lived in Mole End!

Toad is nice and rich.
He lives in Toad Hall,
And drives a motorcar
Which he drove into a wall!

Rat is a boating expert.
He lives by the river.
So sometimes in the winter,
He has to shiver.

Badger lives underground,
And he is such a boss!
When he gives friends advice
They sometimes get cross.

Together they are four friends,
Even if they just lay in the sun,
You can be sure
That they always have fun!

Joey was a student in Ruth Ellen Kelley's fifth grade at Kellogg Elementary School in Huntington, West Virginia.

Dear Diary

by
Erin Miller

Eleven-year-old Jill began writing in her diary:

> Dear Diary:
>
> This is our third day at the new house. We are pretty much all settled in except for cleaning our attic which we probably won't start for about another week. It's a complete mess!
>
> I still haven't met any "good" friends. I've only talked to a girl named Katie who claims our big, white house is haunted!
>
> Love,
> Jill

Jill locked her diary and set it on her dresser. Then she hid the key in her jewelry box.

The next morning Jill was braiding her long blonde hair when she saw a pink tassel dangling from her diary. Quickly, she got her diary key and opened it. Inside was an old fashioned bookmark. It was cloth with yellow lace around the edges. In the top left-hand and bottom right-hand corners flowers and a butterfly were embroidered. In the middle, "Friends Are Forever" was written. Jill loved it, but who could have given it to her?

The next night, Jill wrote in her diary again:

> Dear Diary:
>
> Today Katie informed me that there was a party and I wasn't invited. Oh, well.
>
> I went hiking with my family. We had a picnic at Singing Bird Ridge. It was sort of fun except I didn't get to meet any new kids. I plan to look tomorrow.
>
> Something strange has happened to me. I found a bookmark that said "Friends are Forever" in my diary. It looks really old. Maybe it's something my mother found? I'm going to watch for clues.
>
> Yours truly,
> Jill

Jill quietly shut her diary and placed it on her white dresser. This time she put the heart-shaped key in her nightstand drawer.

The next morning Jill awoke to the early morning sunshine coming through her window. Jill decided to see if the gift-giver had come again, and to her surprise he had! Resting on the diary, Jill found a pretty light blue flower with a yellow middle. It had been carefully pressed and a yellow ribbon was tied around its stem. Jill began to write in her diary:

In 1990-91 Erin was a student of Bonnie Farrar at Williamsburg Independent School in Williamsburg, Kentucky.

Dear Diary:

I just found the most beautiful flower I've
ever seen on top of my diary. It even has a little
yellow bow around it. It would be so nice to have
a patch of these flowers in the yard.

Sincerely,
Jill

Two days had gone by and Jill hadn't heard from the gift giver.

"Maybe it was Mom who gave me the gifts after all," Jill thought to herself.

Saturday morning Jill got her jeans and tee-shirt on and went to her dresser not expecting to see any surprises. She about flipped when she saw a small, pink calico bag labeled "asters." She carefully untied it and there were some seeds.

"The pressed flower I got yesterday could have been an aster!" Jill said to herself. "I'll plant these right away!"

She ran to the shed and got a spade. She found a pretty section of the yard where there were three white dogwoods. She began digging in the middle of the circle. Jill put the seeds in the soil. As she emptied the last seeds, a thin slip of paper drifted out. Jill picked up the paper, which looked like it had been torn from a Bible. It said, "A friend loveth at all times" (Proverbs 17:17).

She read the words over again and again. Then it came to her. The gift-giver had been very generous. She wanted to show that she appreciated their thoughtfulness.

Jill ran back to the house and searched through her jewelry box. She found a heart locket on a chain. The locket was silver with a flower engraved on it.

That night, Jill laid the locket and chain on her diary and went to bed. The next morning she was awakened by thunder and the rain tapping on her window. Jill ran to her dresser. The silver heart locket and chain were gone!

She dressed and went to breakfast. Jill could hear her parents cleaning up in the attic. Soon her mother came down the stairs balancing an old lamp and a book in her arms,

"Jill, look what I found," her mother said excitedly. "It's an old photo album dated 1839!"

Jill started to look through the album. She came to a large picture of a young girl about eleven or twelve. The girl was sitting in a wicker chair in front of three dogwoods. She had light, curly hair, and had on a fluffy white dress. The girl was holding a bouquet of asters and around her neck was a heart-shaped locket with a flower engraved in the middle. A cold chill ran down Jill's spine, but then she smiled and thought to herself, "I wonder if she likes strawberry suckers."

◆

Help Us—
A Play

by

Natalie Ray, Megan Workman, Paige Niday, Christy Salyers, and Elizabeth Dowis

Students who wrote and performed "Help Us—A Play" were in Ruth Ellen Kelley's fifth grade at Kellogg Elementary School in Huntington, West Virginia.

Cast of Characters: Toad, Rat, Mole, Otter, Badger, Car Dealer, and Nurse

Scene 1

The Parlor of Toad Hall

Toad (crying): I'm sorry I stole a new motorcar.

Rat (indignantly): Well, you should be!

Mole (politely): You got everything you deserved.

Otter (defensively): Quit picking on him! Can't you see he is sorry?

Toad (smiling): Thank you, Otter.

Badger (grumbling): You know how he is. He won't listen.

(Toad walks out of the room with his head down.)

Rat (whispering): I know! Let's test him. We'll take him to a car dealer and see if he is sincere.

Scene 2

The Showroom of the Car Dealer

Car Dealer: May I help you?

Rat (whispers in the ear of the car dealer)

Car Dealer: Okey-dokey!

(The Dealer begins to walk around the lot followed by Toad, Rat, Mole, Badger, and Otter. No one speaks aloud. They all pretend to be looking at cars.)

Toad (hops into a car, pulling the Dealer in with him): I'm going to the mall!

All: Oh no!!

(Toad and the Car Dealer exit off stage. In the distance, there is a crash.)

Otter and Badger: THEY WRECKED!

(The friends rush to the accident scene.)

Toad (sitting in the road): Poop, poop.

Car Dealer (holding his head): I think I'm dead.

Scene 3

The Huntington Hospital

(A nurse is trying to ask Toad questions about the accident.)

Rat: Don't expect him to tell you the truth.

Toad: I always tell the truth!

Car Dealer: Hush Toad! You have already got me in enough trouble.

Nurse: Would someone please answer these two questions? How did they wreck? Were they thrown out of the car?

Mole: They wrecked when they hit Go-Mart.

Otter: Yes, they were thrown out of the car. Are they hurt? How bad?

Nurse: Toad has a broken leg. The Car Dealer has a broken arm and 150 stitches in his head.

Rat: They will live, won't they?

Nurse: Yes, they will live.

Badger: Toad will live, but **he won't listen.**

* * *

Cinquains

by

Jason Smith

TOAD
Mean, cruel
Drives like a maniac
Selfish, but friendly
REPTILE

RATTY
Boating expert
Rows like a fish swims
Friend of Mole
WATER RAT

MOLE
Kind, friendly
Runs like a turtle
Friend of Ratty
RODENT

BADGER
Very wise
Fights like a wolverine
Friendly to all
THE GREAT FIGHTER

Jason was in Ruth Kelley's fifth grade at Kellogg Elementary School in Huntington, West Virginia.

Four Friends

by

Paige Niday

Deep in the Wild Woods lived some friends
And that is the way my poem begins.

One was a Rat; one was a Mole.
One lived in water, the other in a hole.

One was a Badger; one was a Toad.
One was wise; the other was dangerous on the road.

Toad was adventurous and got put in jail.
He stole a motorcar, but they found his trail.

Mole was a spring cleaner.
He worked all the time.
Badger was an old guy,
Who didn't have a dime.

Rat is funny; he's also Mole's boss.
He likes to write poems
And put down his thoughts.

These four characters were all good friends.
Their lives go on, but my poem must end.

Wayfarer Rat

by

Brian Arthur

When the Wayfarer Rat came around,
He told Ratty what he had found.

He put Ratty in a trance,
But Mole wouldn't let him take a chance.

Mole, from the heart,
Thought Ratty might leave, and he just couldn't bear to part.

So Mole tried to stop him,
And Mole took him down
With a football-like tackle
And a thunderin' sound.

From now until then
Ratty and Mole were always together again.

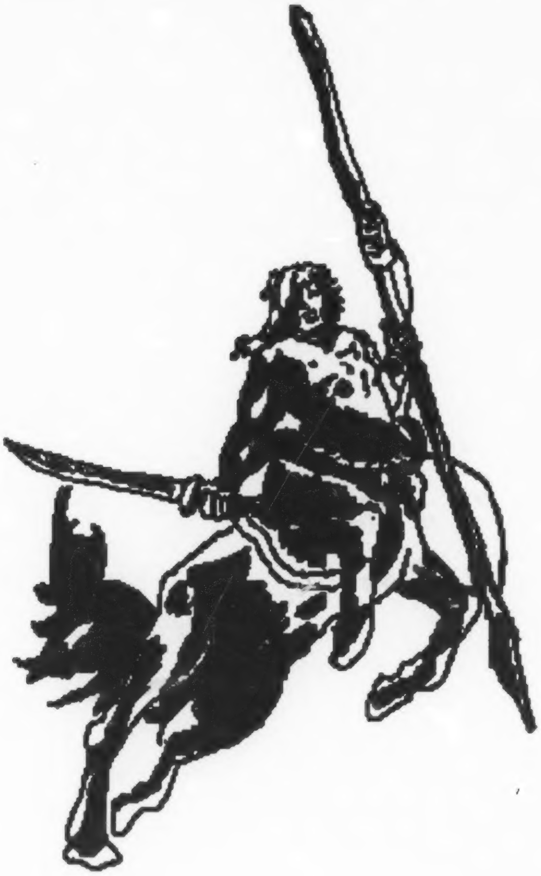
Paige and Brian were students in Ruth Ellen Kelley's fifth grade at Kellogg Elementary School in Huntington, West Virginia.

Say a hearty yes to your adventure . . .

the adventure of the hero—the adventure of being alive.

—Campbell, The Power of Myth

THE HERO



Dwayne Lewis' illustration of "The Hero" appeared in the February 1991 issue of *Road To Wonderful*. He was a student in DeAnn Setler's class at Arthur I. Boreman Elementary School in Charleston, West Virginia.

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The Hero

by

Philip Lowe

The trolls that lived at the dragon's lair
Came to the town and kidnapped the mayor.
The people screamed and the people cried,
Come Hero, Come Hero.

The hero came and killed the trolls.
He found the mayor and untied his coils.
The people laughed and the people said,
Thanks Hero, Thanks Hero.

The poisonous snakes from the forest so green
Entered the town and bit the queen.
The people, the people yelled really loud,
Come Hero, Fast Hero.

The hero killed fifty snakes at a minimum.
He got back to the queen and sucked out the venom.
The people hugged and the people kissed
The Hero, The Hero.

Then some wild dogs bit the leg off the prince.
They ran around, buried it under a fence.
The people ran and the people cried,
Come Hero, Fast Hero.

The hero came and scattered the dogs,
Dug up the leg and sewed it back on.
The people sighed a sigh of relief,
Thanks Hero, Thanks Hero.

Then one day the hero died.
The people came and the people cried.
They gathered around to give their thanks to
The Hero, The Hero.

In 1990-91, Philip was a seventh-grade student in Cesily King's class at McCracken Junior High School in Spartanburg, South Carolina. His poem "The Hero" won the Grand Prize in the Written Competition at the Fantasy Fair.

Narnia and Druid's Grove: How Children Can Become Heroes in Wartime

by
Isabel B. Stanley

Like World War II, the Korean Conflict, and Vietnam, the Gulf War has made us aware of children who have been separated from their parents, as fathers—and now mothers—have been shipped overseas while the children are farmed out to relatives and friends. Pediatricians and child psychologists have appeared on television to warn of the probable impact of war separations on children of various ages, and teachers have encountered homesick and worried students in their classrooms. To be sure, children endure separations in peacetime due to divorce, abandonment and other family problems, but wars place a special burden on children because their sense of loss is heightened by fear of a parent's death.

During World War II many British children were sent to the country or to America and Canada to avoid the terrors of the blitz in London and other cities. While fathers served overseas and mothers held down wartime jobs in bomb-ruined urban areas, the children were sent to stay with relatives, friends and total strangers willing to take the children in. The placement of children often hinged on the availability of an extra bedroom or the wherewithal to feed another mouth, not the talent to care for a homesick eight-year-old. Often the children's caretakers were elderly and unused to the rowdiness of the young, and both the young and the old had to make major adjustments while coping with homesickness.

C. S. Lewis uses just such a wartime evacuation as the frame for his Narnia series. Two sisters and two brothers are staying with a kindly bachelor professor who leaves the children to their own devices except for occasional injections of avuncular advice. In *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, published in 1950, the youngest girl, Lucy, discovers the magical land of Narnia in the back of the wardrobe, and the quartet are launched on seven books of adventures. Lewis does not stress the homesickness of the children, but the world of Narnia clearly helps the children to deal with their war-torn world.

Another British children's author, Nina Bawden, has written a story about young evacuees from the blitz, *Carrie's War*, published in 1973, which is more realistic than the Narnia books but would serve as a good companion piece to Lewis's work in helping present-day children to cope with parental separations and war.

In *Carrie's War*, a grown up Carrie, the widowed mother of four children, goes back to Druid's Bottom, the Welsh village where she was billeted during World War II with her younger brother when he was nine and she eleven. Carrie and her children are coping with the death of the children's father while unraveling the source of Carrie's own wartime fears. Most of the book is a flashback which gives us the eleven-year-old's view of wartime evacuation.

Lest this synopsis of the frame of the story sound too dreary, let me hasten to assure the potential reader of *Carrie's War* that she will be caught up in an engaging mystery from page one of the book. Indeed, one of the strengths of *Carrie's War* is that it incorporates serious underlying issues into an appealing story with curious but realistic characters.

Carrie and her brother Nick are placed in the home of an old bachelor, Councillor Samuel Isaac Evans, who is described as "a bully" and who bullies his sister, "Auntie Lou," whom the children come to love. Bawden tells us Evans "would have bullied the children if he had thought they were

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frightened of him," but Mr. Evans had false teeth, and Nick observes, "you can't really be scared of someone whose teeth might fall out" (27-28). The children discover that Evans and Auntie Lou have an estranged older sister Mrs. Gotobed who lives on a run-down estate outside of town. A visit to her home at Druid's Grove introduces them to Hepzibah Green, her warm-hearted housekeeper, who becomes a mother figure in the book, and to Mr. Johnny Gotobed, a retarded adult and remote cousin of Mrs. Gotobed's late husband.

Mr. Johnny makes a gobbling sound like a turkey when he speaks which initially scares the children, but they come to understand his garbled speech and shy ways. Bawden's sensitive portrait of a retarded adult is a strong feature of *Carrie's War*, as are her depictions of other characters. Even the bully Evans is more than just a bully.

Carrie and Nick have very different personalities and each takes wartime dislocation in a unique way. Carrie, a protective big sister who is forced to act older than her years, suppresses her own needs and fears. Nick is enormously homesick but is the kind of sunny child who naturally attracts the love and attention he needs. Through Nick and Carrie, Bawden shows the reader that no two people ever perceive events similarly, a good reminder for all teachers and parents.

Carrie's War, like the Narnia series, offers the modern child a parallel world of adjustment, possibility, adventure, and independence.

Virginia Stem Owens tells us in her essay, "The Terrible Truth of Children's Stories," that the Narnia books offer "us more than just a distraction from our troubles; they [give] us a parallel, analogous world to live in, one that [is] itself full of dislocation and defect" (4). *Carrie's War*, like the Narnia series, offers the modern child a parallel world of adjustment, possibility, adventure, and independence. If we expect our children to deal effectively and creatively with the adjustments which events such as the Gulf War necessitate, we should offer them good imaginative literature which depicts analogous disruptions and opportunities. Children, like Emily Dickinson, need to dwell in possibility, even in the midst of crisis. C. S. Lewis's Narnia books and Nina Bawden's *Carrie's War* assure our children that adventure and the possibility of heroism are present even in a world of war and loss.

In *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell tells us that each person must embark on the journey of life and become the hero of his own story. Lewis and Bawden assure children that their journey has already begun and that they can become heroic kings and queens, in the case of the Narnia series, or stronger children, in the case of *Carrie's War*. Much of any child's life seems out of her control and governed by the whims of adults. Good imaginative literature can assure a child that even in the midst of disruptions, she does dwell in possibility, that she can be the hero of her own life.

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Robin Hood

by
Sabrina Jo Sparks

Roses are red, violets are blue,
***Charlotte's Web* is good**
But I like Robin Hood.
Robin Hood is daring.
He is very smart.
He held my attention
In every part.
I like him so,
He has a horn
He can blow
To gather all his men.

There was a fight on a bridge.
They both came from over a ridge.
They fought long.
They fought hard.
Little John thought he would win,
So he sang a song.

Robin Hood died.

In 1990-91, Sabrina was a fifth-grade student in Linda Nagy's class at Ben Creek Grade School in Wharncliffe, West Virginia. "Robin Hood" won third place in the fifth- and sixth-grade division of the Poetry Competition at the Fantasy Fair.

A to Z:
The Hero Quest in Literature and History

by

Robert J. Higgs

Some Ideas on the Hero:

A. The hero is a composite ideal reflecting skill as well as "old verities": courage, honor, pity, truth, compassion, strength and wisdom (*Fortitude et Sapienta*), *mens sana in corpore sano*, *eutrapelia* ("well-turningness"), strength and beauty, music and gymnastic. Modern comic book heroes exhibit these qualities, e.g. Captain Marvel, who says SHAZAM (S for wisdom of Solomon, H for strength of Hercules, etc.).

B. The heroic event may be sudden (dramatic) or prolonged (unnoticed or even unappreciated). Heroes are everywhere.

C. The heroic quest might well be a "categorical imperative," an inherent tendency toward order (with freedom) in the human psyche, like "time" and "space." See events in the life of hero (Raglan 174-213).

D. Animals may be heroic as well as humans, for example, the muskrat chewing off his leg caught in a trap to free itself, as Thoreau observed. Even matter exhibits the composite characteristics of the hero ideal, the earth as survivor.

E. Gods are super heroes exhibiting on a cosmic scale the composite ideal, strength and wisdom. See many references in scripture.

F. The heroic deed or heroic life is "conscious." Instinct here is regarded as a type of consciousness, since it "knows." Instinct is "frozen thought" of a previous age.

G. The hero is a natural "aristocrat" — the best, *aristoi*, exhibiting virtue and talent, a composite idea, not one who pursues wealth for its own sake and invidious distinction.

H. In the West the role of the dramatic hero has generally been reserved for males of the upperclass.

I. There is often a vast gap between the hero in history and the hero in literature, between the thing and the version of the thing, e.g. King Arthur, Henry V, and Davy Crockett.

J. The royal hero has often had a boon companion, a "dark" companion, a clown, a familiar figure in popular literature, e.g. Prince Hal and Falstaff. (See Raglan 205-17).

K. This familiar pair represents two perceived sides of the psyche, the conscious ("higher") and the unconscious ("lower"). In the psyche, however, there is no "lower" or "higher."

L. As the royal hero of the old aristocracies disappears, the old boon companions, the slave, the Indian, the clown, the child, are themselves transformed into heroes in an emerging democratic society, e.g. Huck Finn, Jesse B. Semple

(Langston Hughes), Big Chief (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest)*, Invisible Man in Ellison's novel by that name. The common man, Willie Loman in *Death of A Salesman*, can exhibit tragic characteristics once the sole possession of the royal hero.

M. Similarly the woman, traditionally a witness of the heroic act, has also emerged as a hero of action. (See the novels of Ursula Le Guin, Jane Yolen, and Harriette Arnow.)

N. The conscious heroic quest in a democratic society, therefore, may be essentially the same for men and women. The individual leaves a matriarchal, dependent stage and enters into the patriarchal stage **without** losing the nurturing qualities of the former so that both strength and wisdom are preserved. Note that Campbell and Jung—and maybe Le Guin—see the female hero quest as different and it **may** be.

O. Regardless of how the heroic quest begins, the characteristics of the hero are beyond gender. The democratic heroes must obey the eternal heroic law, the composite ideal, just as the old royal hero did, or he or she will suffer hubris, pride.

P. Humor itself can be an old verity, hence a vehicle of heroic thought. Koestler places humor on the same level as science and art.

Q. We probably need "world-class" heroes, those who bring a boon to all humanity and to the planet itself, in addition to ordinary people doing their jobs well. The democratic hero shows a reverence for life and a respect for quality. Nationalistic or ideological heroes often only care about their own kind or perpetuation of their own dogmas.

R. The heroic quest is finally a psychological quest seeking wholeness of being or the restoration of sanity or order so that life can flourish; so that one may have life "abundantly."

S. *Bios* (organic nature) must be given the same recognition as *Mekos* (mechanical order). Both are probably necessary for quality functioning of society.

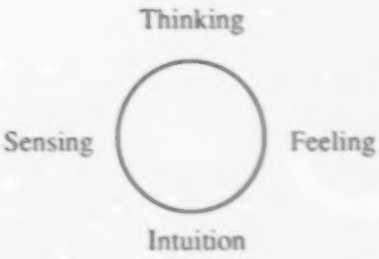
T. The shepherd must be honored as well as the knight—the staff as well as the sword. Note *The Hobbit* in this regard.

U. Epic heroes, knights, and heroes of modern literature, we now realize, exhibit this drive (conscious or unconscious) toward wholeness. The ego is good but is the best when merged with the self—integration of consciousness and unconsciousness.

V. The teacher as hero: the modern teacher is a tutelary figure to future "heroes" who will need to develop "the best" society.

W. The return of the *eutrapelos* ideal, well-turningness between the humorous and the sober, play and work, the ectopsychic functions. The development of all the mind is a type of heroic, willed action.

***Eutrapelos* Ideal**



X. Heroic language may be **necessary** for a conscious heroic society. Metaphorical language is "useless" in the sense of "priceless."

Y. Martin Luther King may be considered a shepherd **and** knight. (Examples of heroic language; integration of sensing, thinking, intuition, and feeling.)

Z. Bravery and courage, admirable as they are, are also qualities displayed by despots. Even "freedom" is no guarantee of a virtuous society. A nation might be free, brave and courageous, and still be severely flawed. Freedom is an **opportunity** or **condition,** not necessarily a virtue. Much, if not all, depends on what is done with freedom. The essence, then, of the heroic ideal in the modern world is democracy, the belief in the worth of every individual, as reflected in "The Declaration of Independence": "We hold these truths to be self-evident. . . ." This last point, Z, is the first, A, that the heroic, conscious meaningful life should be available to all. This is the heroic **ideal.** Heroic **action** illustrates the **ideal.**

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❧

The Hero

by
Edythe R. Green

In contemporary society a man who rushes into traffic to rescue a child would be considered a hero and a local celebrity for a time. Joseph Campbell in *The Power of Myth*, however, sees a greater distinction between the two terms and leads us to consider the merits of both.

In simplest form, Campbell believes the celebrity lives for self while the hero lives for others. He parallels the journey toward a heroic climax with that of the traditional coming-of-age theme. A hero is the culmination of a life lived in self-discovery that leads to wisdom and the power to serve others. He believes life should be an adventure that lets us continue to find new strengths within ourselves. The desired state is evident in the biblical admonition to "Know thyself." One who has this knowledge will ideally have the confidence to reach the ultimate—"Love thy enemy as thyself."

Bilbo Baggins in *The Hobbit* is an example of a hero. He became so involved in his quest that he didn't care what others thought of him. He was not so popular after his self-discovery, but he gained respect—something Campbell and J. R. R. Tolkien consider much more valuable.

The question of popularity versus respect is one faced by heroes in any society. Older cultures seem to have learned the importance of the hero more than the United States has. We are still a new nation with an extrememly heterogeneous population. Our ancestors' struggle to survive in a hostile environment has given us a heritage based on technology. As we mature as a nation, we need to be able to stop and recognize the values that have been ignored. Campbell says, "the hero symbolizes our ability to control the irrational savage within us." When self-sacrificing individuals replace rock stars as our national heroes, we shall have reached a plateau.

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The Need For Heroes

by

Cesily King

Finding a hero for today's student is not an easy task. Historical heroes seem too dry and one-sided. Contemporary heroes face close scrutiny. Just let someone be called a "hero" and see what happens: the press immediately rummages through that person's past, looking for enough foibles and mistakes to make the would-be hero again life-sized. Americans can't have a hero who is a goody-goody, or too prim and proper, or self-righteous, or overbearing. Go too far one way and the result is Rambo or the Terminator, not persons people want to see emulated on their neighborhood streets. But go too far the other way, and the result is a wimp, which doesn't work either.

We need heroes, though. We need the inspiration they provide. We need to see that the virtues we admire do not relegate heroes to "wimp" status; that heroes can be idealistic and honorable and courageous and virtuous without looking ridiculous. So the qualities of heroes become important for students to know, and one of the best ways is through fantasy literature.

When my eighth-grade classes read and studied *The Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula K. Le Guin, we had some interesting discussions about the qualities of heroism. In the beginning of the novel Ged rescues his village from an invading army. Though all my students admitted this was a heroic gesture, most of them did not think Ged was a hero in the largest sense of the word. Why? They couldn't say; they weren't sure what they expected of a hero.

Later in the novel, Ged goes to a school. Here the most important lessons he learns are not ones taught in the classrooms, but ones learned within the school community. Ged learns the price of pride, of showing off. Humility and trying to correct the results of mistakes are two important qualities for a hero. Ged also learns about the importance of balance in life. He learns that action is easy, but to refrain from unnecessary action is more difficult. He learns that he cannot do everything by himself; that he can get help from others; and that despite his mistakes, he is worthy of trust. At the end of the book, I asked students **when** Ged becomes a hero. Even though Ged does nothing during his time at school that could be called heroic, the classroom discussion returned to this period of Ged's life. Without the lessons he learns during this time, Ged could not have achieved his later heroic status.

One interesting exercise for the students is to place one of the characters from a novel into a modern situation. For example, how would Ged have handled the confrontation in Iraq if he had been President? How would this school be different if Ged were the principal? Can you describe a situation you have been in when you would have liked Ged there to advise you?

Vetch, Ged's friend, also generated some interesting comments about heroism from students. When asked if Vetch was a hero, students' first reactions were to laugh, but when we examined Vetch's role in two of the most dangerous situations Ged faced, students were forced to examine their expectations of a hero. In the first, Vetch tries to prevent Ged's pride from overcoming his good sense. When that fails and Ged lets the shadow out, Vetch, though terrified, is the only one who tries to come to his aid. In the

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last chapters, as Ged confronts the shadow, Vetch goes with him, sailing to the end of the world and again attempting to reach Ged in the final struggle. Vetch is ready to make the last effort to stop the shadow when he thinks Ged has lost.

In *The Wizard of Earthsea* Vetch is portrayed as an overweight, easy-going friend, not as the way students imagine a hero. But Vetch is there when Ged needs him. Following Vetch's advice would have prevented many of Ged's problems. When the danger is the greatest, Vetch is struggling to get to Ged's side, even at the risk of his own life. Vetch's friendship allows him to become heroic, and friendship is attainable by any student.

Another important aspect for students to discuss is Jasper, Ged's earliest antagonist. Ged and Jasper seem to have many similarities. Both have power, an aptitude for learning wizardry, and a strong sense of pride. After Ged releases the shadow, Jasper drops out of school and goes to the rival wizards. But even there he is not successful and is never heard from again. How could Jasper have been "saved"? What is the difference between them that Jasper comes to nothing and Ged goes on to become a hero? Where do we see that around us? How can we make a difference by the way we treat the people around us?

The lessons Ged learns, the constancy of Vetch's friendship, and the comparison of Jasper and Ged provide ideas that can inspire anyone to seek higher goals. Once we can admire these characters for their heroic virtues, discovering those virtues in others becomes easier, and aspiring to attain higher ideals in ourselves becomes more of a possibility.

Fantasy

by
Chad Withrow

Of Knights and Men
And all their kin,
Of many times
And many rhymes,
Of all the places,
And countless faces,

Fantasy is a land—
It is not planned—
It comes from imagination,
Full of your creation.

In 1990-91, Chad was an eighth-grade student in Paula Morrow's class at Eastbrook Middle School in Dalton, Georgia.

The Heroic Transformation of Bilbo Baggins

by

Jeffrey Gold

In the final chapter of *The Hobbit*, Gandalf declared: "My dear Bilbo . . . You are not the hobbit that you were" (Tolkien 284). Mr. Bilbo Baggins goes through a profound transformation. Bilbo evolves from a quiet, ordinary, respectable Hobbit into a bold adventurer. As a result of this metamorphosis, he "lost his reputation," and "he was no longer quite respectable" (Tolkien 285). Despite this loss of reputation, his transformation is heroic. Bilbo accomplished "something beyond the normal range of achievement and experience" (Campbell 123).

Although the change in Bilbo is slow and gradual, one particular heroic deed is pivotal in his development:

> Somehow the killing of the giant spider, all alone by himself in the dark without the help of the wizard or the dwarves or of anyone else, made a great difference to Mr. Baggins. He felt a different person, and much fiercer and bolder in spite of an empty stomach, as he wiped his sword on the grass and put it back into its sheath. (154)

It is this deed that elicits the respect and admiration of the dwarves (Tolkien 163). It was this deed that signals that the alchemical change is under way. This change, the growth of Mr. Bilbo Baggins, is the subject of this essay.

In an unpublished article, William Kirkwood surveys several different metaphors for spiritual evolution (1-9). These metaphors are found in a variety of religious traditions throughout the world. I would like to suggest that the major metaphors discussed by Professor Kirkwood can be found not only in religious literature, but also in *The Hobbit*. The three main metaphors discussed by Professor Kirkwood are: 1) the journey or the pilgrimage; 2) the holy war; and 3) awakening. Each of these metaphors has an important role in the evolution of Bilbo. I will begin by discussing the implications of each metaphor and will then show the role played by each metaphor in the metamorphosis of Bilbo.

The journey or pilgrimage metaphor

The journey or the pilgrimage is sometimes described as "an exodus to the promised land, a crossing to the opposite shore, and an ascent" (Kirkwood 1). The pilgrim moves from a less desirable state or place to a more desirable one. Michael Graves states that metaphors of pilgrimage imply a "movement from an evil to a holy place" (376). One example of a pilgrimage would be the movement from Egypt (the house of bondage) to the Promised Land (a land flowing with milk and honey). The journey is often long and difficult with many obstacles along the way. As a result of overcoming those obstacles, the pilgrim advances to a richer and more mature condition.

Frequently, the journey or quest involves a cycle, a going and returning (Campbell 123). The cycle includes a departure, fulfillment, and a return. For example, Moses departs by ascending the mountain, is fulfilled on the summit of the mountain where he receives a divine message, and returns down the mountain to share the message with the children of Israel. Jesus goes into the desert, receives a message, and returns from the desert to share and teach. The Buddha goes into solitude sitting beneath the Bo tree, receives enlightenment, and returns to instruct others (Campbell 135-36).

Jeffrey Gold is professor of philosophy at East Tennessee State University. He received his bachelor's at the University of Wisconsin (1973) and his master's and doctrate at Ohio State University (1974, 1978). His major interest is mysticism.

When we see the complete title of the book is *The Hobbit or There and Back Again*, we are reminded that Bilbo's journey is cyclical. Bilbo departs the Hill, receives riches, and returns home. Furthermore, Bilbo overcomes many obstacles and returns as a more mature, braver, bolder Hobbit. At the beginning of the book, Tolkien says: "This is a story of how a Baggins had an adventure, and found himself doing and saying things altogether unexpected. He may have lost the neighbours' respect, but he gained—well, you will see whether he gained anything in the end" (16). Bilbo leaves as a respectable, genteel, and dull Hobbit. He returns as a self-reliant, daring, strong Hobbit. As Gandalf says, Bilbo is not the same Hobbit that he was. The journey is complete.

The battle or war metaphor

Seeing that the journey metaphor is prominent in *The Hobbit*, let us turn to the second metaphor for spiritual evolution, the battle or war metaphor. The *Bhagavad Gita* begins on Kurukshetra, the battlefield of life. The forces of light (represented by the Pandavas) must do battle with the forces of darkness (represented by the Kuravas). Images of holy wars, slaying the infidel, and wrestling with angels permeate many religious traditions. From the crusades to *Star Wars*, we are reminded that the forces of good must defeat the forces of evil.

Battle images fill the pages of *The Hobbit*. Bilbo and the dwarves fight spiders, Gollum, goblins, wargs, trolls, wild wolves, and ultimately Smaug, the dragon. Bilbo uses his wits, his courage, and his magic ring to defeat the wide variety of evil characters that he encounters. Here is one battle scene (abridged):

> So began a battle that none had expected; and it was called the Battle of Five Armies, and it was very terrible. Upon one side were the Goblins, and the wild Wolves, and upon the other were Elves and Men and Dwarves. . . .
>
> It was a terrible battle. . . .
>
> The elves were the first to charge. Their hatred for the goblins is cold and bitter. Their spears and swords shone in the gloom with a gleam of chill flame, so deadly was the wrath of the hands that held them. As soon as the host of their enemies was dense in the valley, they sent against it a shower of arrows, and each flickered as it fled as if with stinging fire. Behind the arrows a thousand of their spearmen leapt down and charged. The yells were deafening. The rocks were stained black with goblin blood. (266-68)

This scene is fairly typical of the many gruesome battles fought in *The Hobbit*. One kind of heroism, according to Joseph Campbell "is the physical deed, in which the hero performs a courageous act in battle or saves a life" (123). Mr. Baggins performs many such heroic deeds throughout *The Hobbit*.

As I mentioned earlier, battle metaphors permeate religious literature. Some interpret those battles as actual, literal, factual battles. For example, many believe that the battle described in the *Mahabharata* or the many battles recounted in the Torah were concrete, historical clashes.

Others interpret those battle images as symbolic of the internal battles we all must fight. On this view, slaying the idolater does not mean we ought to organize a crusade to slay other people we deem to be idolatrous infidels. Instead, it means that we must slay those idolatrous thoughts within our own breast. Joseph Campbell states that "all of these wonderful poetic images of mythology are referring to something in you" (57). Amplifying upon this theme, he says: "Heaven and hell are within us, and all the gods are within us. . . . All the gods, all the heavens, all the worlds, are within us. . . . Myth is a manifestation in symbolic images, in metaphorical images, of the energies of the organs of the body in conflict with each other" (39).

It is easy to find examples of metaphorical interpretations of mythological battle images. Three different translators of the *Bhagavad Gita* all interpret the *Gita* in this manner. Easwaran states: "The battlefield is a perfect backdrop, but the Gita's subject is the war within, the struggle for self-mastery that every human being must wage if he or she is to emerge from life victorious" (2-3). Later, he states: "It was Vyasa's genius to take the whole great Mahabharata epic and see it as metaphor for the perennial war between the forces of light and the forces of darkness in every human heart" (7). Juan Mascaro echoes this sentiment:

> It is obvious that the war in the *Bhagavad Gita* has a symbolic meaning. . . . We find in the *Gita* that there is going to be a great battle for the rule of a Kingdom; and how can we doubt that this is the Kingdom of Heaven, the kingdom of the soul? . . . A spiritual reader of the *Gita* will find in it the great spiritual struggle of a human soul. (22-23)

And, finally, Barbara Miller asserts: "The setting of the *Gita* is the battlefield of Kurukshetra as the war is about to begin. It is not only a physical place but is representative of a state of mind" (5). All of these translators of the *Gita* insist that the *Gita* is only understood fully when one understands that the battles fought on Kūrukshetra are internal, psychological battles rather than external, physical battles. There is a long tradition in Judaism of interpreting the Torah in a similar manner.

It is not at all clear that we should interpret *The Hobbit* as representing some kind of internal struggle. However, if we do interpret it in that manner, the symbolism of the slaying of the dragon, Smaug, is of particular interest. Campbell states that "our Western dragons represent greed" (149). This fits with Tolkien's descriptions of Smaug. Smaug hoards and guards vast treasures that he cannot use. He "dreams of greed and violence" (207). And when Smaug flies into a rage, it is described as "the sort of rage that is only seen when rich folk that have more than they can enjoy suddenly lose something that they have long had but have never before used or wanted" (208).

If we were to interpret *The Hobbit* internally or psychologically, slaying the dragon would represent slaying the greed or selfishness within. Campbell states: "Psychologically, the dragon is one's own binding of oneself to one's ego. We're captured in our own dragon cage. . . . The ultimate dragon is within you, it is your ego clamping you down" (149). Although Bilbo is not the actual dragon slayer in *The Hobbit*, he is able to slay the internal dragon. He gives up the most treasured jewel of all, the Arkenstone, to save the dwarves. He gives up his share of the profits, risked his friendship with Thorin, and even risked his own life to try and provide a safe return for his comrades. After giving up the Arkenstone, Gandalf appears out of nowhere and says: "Well done! Mr. Baggins! . . . There is always more about you than anyone expects!" (258). Bilbo is able to slay the ultimate dragon, the greed within, and thereby emerges a hero. Campbell says: "A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself" (123). This is an accurate description of Bilbo.

The awakening metaphor

The third and final metaphor is the metaphor of awakening which can be found in a variety of religious traditions. The term "Buddha" is derived from a Sanskrit root meaning "to awaken" (Kirkwood 1). The prophet Isaiah proclaims "Awake, awake, Stand up, O Jerusalem" (Isa. 51:17). In the next chapter, he reiterates his plea: "Awake, awake, Put on thy strength, O Zion" (Isa. 52:1). Along similar lines, Paul says: "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light" (Eph. 5:14). In both Mark and Luke, Jesus tells the parable of the watchful servant who must remain awake (Mark 13:34-36). In Luke, Jesus says: "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes" (12:35-40). Similar images can be found in the writings of the Sufis and the texts of Hinduism (Kirkwood 2-9).

When a prophet or a sage urges us to wake up, the assumption is that, in some way, we have fallen asleep. In falling asleep, we have forgotten who we are. Saints, sages, and prophets frequently compare the state of sleep with a kind of spiritual amnesia in which we have forgotten our true nature. In Isaiah (Chapters 51 and 52), the prophet frequently urges the children of Israel to awaken. In those same chapters, he proclaims: "Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were digged" (Isa. 51:1). The need for remembrance is then repeated: "Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you" (Isa. 51:2). Isaiah is saying that his people have forgotten their heritage, their ancestry, their roots. When someone doesn't know what he or she is made of (the rock from which you are hewn) nor where he or she came from (the parents who bore you), that person can be said to be unaware of who he or she is. The process of awakening is the process of becoming more self-aware. Hinduism and Yoga emphasize that we have forgotten our true nature (Atman), and through the process of meditation, we will become more aware of our nature.

Just as Isaiah points out to the children of Israel their ancestry, Tolkien points out Bilbo's lineage:

> As I was saying, the mother of this hobbit—of Bilbo Baggins, that is—was the fabulous Belladonna Took, one of the three remarkable daughters of the Old Took, head of the hobbits who lived across The Water, the small river that ran at the foot of The Hill. It was often said (in other families) that long ago one of the Took ancestors must have taken a fairy wife. That was, of course, absurd, but certainly there was still something not entirely hobbit-like about them, and once in a while members of the Took-clan would go and have adventures. They discreetly disappeared, and the family hushed it up; but the fact remained that the Tooks were not as respectable as the Bagginses, though they were undoubtedly richer. (16)

Bilbo's Tookish nature begins to unfold as the adventure progresses.

Took blood pulses through Bilbo's veins, but because he is raised as a respectable Baggins, he is unaware of this side of his nature. However, when the dwarves began to sing of ancient adventures, "something Tookish woke up inside him, and he wished to go and see the great mountains, and hear the pine-trees and the waterfalls, and explore" (Tolkien 28). This is the beginning of Bilbo's awakening.

Gandalf is aware of Bilbo's nature long before Bilbo is aware of it. In the first chapter, Gandalf tells the dwarves: "There is a lot more in him than you guess, and a deal more than he has any idea of himself" (31-32). After Bilbo evades Gollum, he earns a new respect from the dwarves. Gandalf then says to the dwarves: "What did I tell you? . . . Mr. Baggins has more about him than you guess" (99). Gandalf repeats that line when he is about to leave the adventure, and, again, at the very end of the story (137, 258). Bilbo's Tookish nature begins to unfold as the adventure progresses.

As we have seen, all three metaphors (the journey, the battle, and the awakening) play a role in *The Hobbit*. Bilbo journeys to a distant kingdom and returns a more mature hobbit. During his journey, he engages in countless battles displaying the virtues of courage and compassion. And, though Bilbo returns a different hobbit, he does so by awakening to and manifesting the Tookish nature that lay dormant within him.

NOTES

[1] See Jeffrey Gold, " Spiritual Zionism," *Dialogue and Alliance* 5 (Summer 1991), 52-65.

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* * *

The basic motif of the universal hero's journey—

leaving one condition and finding the source of life

to bring you forth into a richer or mature condition

—Campbell, The Power of Myth

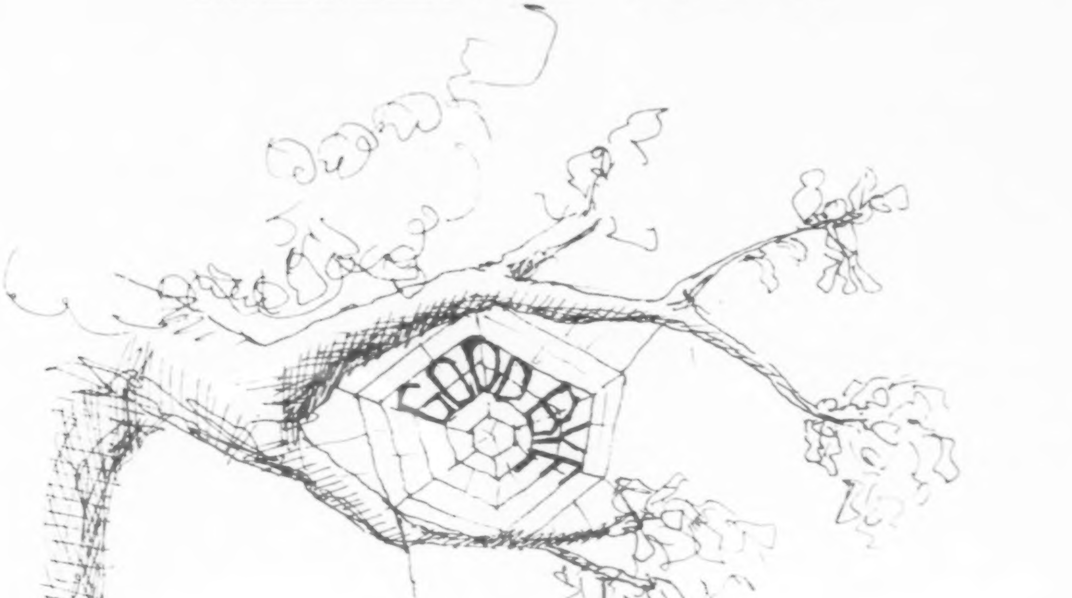
Out of the rocks of fallen wood and leaves, fresh sprouts arise,

from which the lesson appears to have been that from death springs life,

and out of death new birth.

—Campbell, The Power of Myth

MEMENTO MORI



E. B. White and Children's Tragedy

by

R. Chesla Sharp

Eudora Welty in her review of *Essays of E. B. White* for *The New York Times* responds to the volume in terms of its tragic view of life. She says, "What joins all these essays together is the love held by the author for what is transitory in life" (43). She sees a melancholy running through nearly all the essays and says that the structural principle of White is that "indelibility of memory has to do with the meaning at the core of remembered experience; the losable item" (7). I would like to suggest that the same tragic view runs through the children's novels.

In the essays this tragic view is seen in White's use of the *memento mori* theme. This classical motif reminds one that all things must pass away or, in Welty's poignant terms, life is a losable item. The theme is treated somewhat trivially in "Goodbye to Forty-Eighth Street." When White and his wife are making one of their moves to Maine, White learns what Thoreau had discovered earlier: possessions are more easily acquired than got rid of—or more related to the theme of this paper—possessions lose their charm. White says that anyone who is willing can get rid of a chair, but what about a trophy? Trophies are like leeches to White. The ones made of paper, like college diplomas, can be burned if one has the guts, but the ones made of bronze are not only indestructible but are almost impossible to throw away because they have a name on them. White concludes that the work to get rid of the trophies exhausts him more than does the labor for which the awards are presented (*Essays* 4-5).

In "Home-Coming" and "Death of a Pig" White challenges the great chain of being and treats animals as serious subjects for the *memento mori* theme. In the first essay White describes the deer season in Maine and indicates his sympathy with the deer (*Essays* 10); in the second essay White describes his reaction to the death of an animal on his farm and his discovery that "the pig's imbalance becomes the man's." In an odd mixture of references to enemas and allusions to Scripture White says, "The pig's lot and mine were inextricably bound now, as though the rubber tube were the silver cord" (*Essays* 21).

Probably most significantly White treats the *memento mori* theme in the paradoxical situation of the child's birth foretelling the father's death. In "Once More to the Lake" White takes his son to the Maine retreat where White's father had taken him as a boy. White relates that he began to sustain the illusion that his son was he and that, therefore, he was his father. White comes to a sudden revelation as his son puts on his wet swimming trunks: "Languidly, and with no thought of going in, I watched him, his hard little body, skinny and bare, saw him wince slightly as he pulled up around his vitals the small, soggy, icy garment. As he buckled the swollen belt, suddenly my groin felt the chill of death" (*Essays* 202).

White carries this focus on life as a losable item from the essays to the children's books, and it is in the refusal to have a world view for adults and a different world view for children that White makes his great contribution to children's literature. He "tells it like it is" and in such telling he gives us children's tragedy. White told the *Horn Book* that he was not averse to departing from reality when he wrote for children, but he was against departing from the truth (qtd. in Elledge 346).

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This "not departing from the truth" I think means presenting life in tragic terms or, at least, near tragic terms. White's first children's novel is, for the most part, consistent with a tragic view. *Stuart Little* has six main episodes: (1) the difficulty of being a mouse in a human household, (2) the model sailboat race in Central Park, (3) Stuart's love affair with the bird Margola, and (4) the journey in search of Margola. Within the journey there are two self-contained episodes: (5) the substitute teaching at an elementary school and (6) Stuart's brief encounter with a girl his own size in a lovely New England town.

White's first children's novel is, for the most part, consistent with a tragic view.

The sailboat race and the substitute teaching are successful for Stuart. The other four episodes are not. At home Stuart Little has the task of going down the drain to recover his mother's ring, chasing ping-pong balls for the family, staying inside a piano to unstick a key. What ordinarily is the least difficult task becomes a major effort for Stuart. He has to climb a rope to get to the wash basin, then use a wooden hammer to turn on the faucet. He can trap himself in a window blind and the cat hates him.

Stuart Little's date with Harriet Ames is pathetic. Stuart is very uptight. He has never taken a girl canoeing before. At its best the date probably would have been bad. It is a blind date and Stuart has only an ice cream spoon for a paddle. He hopes that Harriet will not notice that his paddle is really just an ice cream spoon. Unfortunately between the time Stuart fixed up the canoe and the time of the date some of the big boys had played with the canoe and had completely messed it up. When Stuart and Harriet find the canoe, Harriet is for repairing it and going canoeing anyway. But Stuart says it is no use; it wouldn't be the same. The date ends before it even starts. Stuart fails a major rite of passage.

In the "Afternoon of an American Boy" White relates his own failed first date:

> I had rehearsed my first line and my second line. I planned to say, "Hello, can I please speak to Eileen?" Then, when she came to the phone, I planned to say, "Hello, Eileen, this is Elwyn White." From there on, I figured I could ad-lib it.
>
> At last, I picked up the receiver and gave the number. As I had suspected, Eileen's mother answered.
>
> ***
>
> She left the phone, and after a while Eileen's voice said, "Hello, Elwyn." This threw my second line out of whack, but I stuck to it doggedly. (*Essays* 160)

White then describes the dance at the Plaza: "It must have been awful. And at six o'clock, emerging, I gave no thought to any further entertainment, such as dinner in town. I simply herded Eileen back all the long, dreary way to Mount Vernon and deposited her, a few minutes after seven, on an empty stomach, at her home" (*Essays* 160).

The real tragedy of *Stuart Little* is the doomed search for Margalo. There is no reason for Stuart to take one road as opposed to another. This lack of a logical way to proceed on the search is revealed in the conversation with the repairman:

> "Which direction are you headed?" he asked.
>
> "North," said Stuart.

> "North is nice," said the repairman. "I've always enjoyed going north. Of course, south-west is a fine direction, too."
>
> "Yes, I suppose it is," said Stuart, thoughtfully.
>
> "And there's east," continued the repairman. "I once had an interesting experience on an easterly course. Do you want me to tell you about it?"
>
> "No, thanks," said Stuart. (118)

Although the odds of a mouse finding a lost bird must be infinitesimal, Stuart, nevertheless, rides into the North: "The sun was just coming up over the hills on his right. As he peered ahead into the great land that stretched before him, the way seemed long. But the sky was bright, and he somehow felt he was headed in the right direction" (131).

White's language allows for an optimism that the event itself does not. White, himself, is evasive when it comes to what he intended with the ending. Elledge tells us that hundreds of children have written White to ask what happened to Stuart after he left the repairman. To a twelve-year-old boy White once responded that "life is essentially inconclusive" (260). White hedges here. Stuart belongs to a familiar class of hero in American literature: the utopian hero whose search for utopia destroys him. Stuart thus shares the fate of Taji in Melville's *Mardi*. After all Taji's friends have abandoned the search for Yillah as useless and although Taji is now alone and is himself pursued by people who would destroy him, he continues and guides his canoe into the ocean. "And thus, pursuers and pursued flew on, over an endless sea" (580).

Life as a losable item is more complexly developed in White's second children's story, *Charlotte's Web*. The novel opens on a world in moral disarray, and it falls to Fern to set that world aright. Most Davids are at least allowed breakfast before taking on their Goliaths, but Fern, who is only eight, is not allowed this luxury. As she and her mother are setting the table for breakfast, Fern learns that her father is going to kill a runt that was born the night before, or as the mother euphemistically puts it, Fern's father has decided to do away with it. It's very small and weak, and it will never amount to anything. Fern's ethical sensitivities rebel at killing something just "because it's smaller than the others" (1). Fern then takes on her father in verbal combat:

Life as a losable item is more complexly developed in White's second children's story, *Charlotte's Web*.

> "Please don't kill it!" she sobbed. "It's unfair."
>
> Mr. Arable stopped walking.
>
> "Fern," he said gently, "you will have to learn to control yourself."
>
> "Control myself?" yelled Fern. "This is a matter of life and death, and you talk about controlling myself."
>
> ***
>
> "But it's unfair," cried Fern. "The pig couldn't help being born small, could it? If I had been very small at birth, would you have killed me?"
>
> Mr. Arable smiled. "Certainly not," he said, looking down at his daughter with love. "But this is different. A little girl is one thing, a little runty pig is another."
>
> "I see no difference," replied Fern, still hanging on to the ax. "This is the most terrible case of injustice I ever heard of." (1-3)

The most poignant scene of the novel is the death of Charlotte:

The most poignant scene of the novel is the death of Charlotte.

> She never moved again. Next day, as the Ferris wheel was being taken apart and the race horses were being loaded into vans and the entertainers were packing up their belongings and driving away in their trailers, Charlotte died. The Fair Grounds were soon deserted. The sheds and buildings were empty and forlorn. The infield was littered with bottles and trash. Nobody, of the hundreds of people that had visited the Fair, knew that a grey spider had played the most important part of all. No one was with her when she died. (171)

Under the license of fantasy literature White would not have had to let Charlotte die at all, but he lets her die to show that death is part of the life process, and by allowing Charlotte to philosophize a little, White challenges a romantic view of life: "After all, what's a life, anyway? We're born, we live a little while, we die. A spider's life can't help being something of a mess, with this trapping and eating flies" (164).

With Charlotte's death the force goes out of Wilbur's life. He is saved only to return to his retirement center at the Zuckermann's farm. The medal of honor is placed above his pen and he grows fat with Templeton. Abandoned by Fern, Wilbur plays godfather to the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Charlotte's that are too timid to leave the nest. Wilbur never forgets Charlotte. Although he loves her children and grandchildren dearly, none of the new spiders ever takes her place in his heart. "It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer" (184).

In *Charlotte's Web*, as in *Stuart Little*, White tries to graph an element of optimism onto an essentially tragic situation. Charlotte's death is an irrevocable loss and is the culmination of a life that "can't help being something of a mess." When death comes Charlotte is alone. Fern grows up and is careful to avoid childish things—presumably things like worrying about pigs being killed because they are small. But Wilbur's escaping death and his rhapsody on his manure pile in the next-to-last paragraph of the novel allow the reader initially to see the action of the novel as victorious.

But Wilbur's escaping being killed becomes less a victory when it is placed in a context of routine farm life. In a statement called "Pigs and Spiders" in *McClurg's Book News*, White says that a farm is a peculiar problem for a person who likes animals because the fate of most livestock is that they are murdered by their benefactors. The creatures may live serenely, but they end violently, and the odor of doom hangs about them always. Of his own farm, he writes: "It used to be clear to me, slopping a pig, that as far as the pig was concerned I could not be counted on, and this, as I say, troubled me. Anyway, the theme of *Charlotte's Web* is that a pig shall be saved, and I have an idea that somewhere deep inside me there was a wish to that effect" (qtd. in Elledge 290).

The farm creatures may live serenely, but they end violently, and the odor of doom hangs about them always.

In this larger context of the relationship between animals and human beings, Wilbur is simply the token pig who is saved from the butcher. Fern and Charlotte have changed very little. All other pigs will go to the butcher. Charlotte is dead; Fern no longer cares.

White's last children's novel provides a challenge to the attempt to read White as a tragic writer. The plot of *The Trumpet of the Swan* is to provide

Louis with something that all other swans are born with. Since Louis is given a mechanical musical voice, I guess one is free to read the story as a triumph for the handicapped. But I think the distinct episodes themselves illustrate White's tragic view. This view is particularly obvious in Louis's night at the Ritz Carlton. The hotel is one of Boston's finest, but from the hotel Louis writes Sam, "A hotel room, even though it has every convenience, can be a lonely place" (136).

Louis cannot get into the Ritz on the basis of his primary identity. He can get in only because he is a celebrity:

> "No birds," the clerk says. "The Ritz doesn't take birds."
> "You take celebrities, don't you?" asked the Boatman.
> "Certainly," replied the clerk.
> "You'd take Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, wouldn't you, if they wanted to spend the night?"
> "Of course," replied the clerk.
> "You'd take Queen Elizabeth, wouldn't you?"
> "Of course."
> "O.K.," said the Boatman. "My friend here is a celebrity. He is a famous musician. He created a sensation in the Public Garden this afternoon." (125-26)

White's last children's novel *The Trumpet of the Swan* provides a challenge to the attempt to read White as a tragic writer.

For White to write a children's story in which life is presented as a losable item, he must reject one of the most common devices of children's literature, the enchanted garden. In *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* the action of the story is enveloped by the cozy home with Mrs. Rabbit, and it is there Peter returns after the episode in Mr. McGregor's garden. The home is certainly surrounded by Mr. McGregor's garden and the garden is a frightful place. "Father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor" (10). When Peter goes into the garden of McGregor he overeats and is almost killed by McGregor. Nevertheless he escapes and returns home where his lost shoes and jacket get only the comment that these are the second little jacket and pair of shoes that Peter has lost in a fortnight.

Thurber's *The 13 Clocks* and the Cinderella story are variations upon the enchanted garden structure. These two stories start with the characters outside the enchanted garden. Outside this enchanted garden the moral world is in disarray. Cinderella is mistreated by her stepmother and sisters, and Saralinda is mistreated by the mean Duke. At the end of her story Cinderella is returned to a perfect world with the Prince, and Saralinda rides off with her prince to the farewell of Mr. Golux: "Keep warm. . . . Ride close together. Remember laughter. You'll need it even in the blessed isles of Ever After" (118-20).

The enchanted garden is the ethical and metaphysical norm for much of children's literature. What happens outside this garden may be interesting and exciting, but ultimately it is not real. Jane Curry, in her lecture entitled "Of Quests and Fantasy" at the Fantasy Fair, suggested, not totally seriously, that fantasy literature allows one to have his horror and still go home for supper (see chap. 1, pp. 3-14). I would like to suggest that children's literature allows one to play with evil, but to deny finally its existence.

By removing the enchanted garden White makes the denial of evil more difficult. There is, however, something in White's telling of the tale which prevents the reader from seeing that the enchanted garden is really gone. Eudora Welty sensed this evasive quality in White's essays and was pleased by it: "There is a melancholy running through nearly all these pieces. . . . It is not the kind of melancholy that leaves us in the end depressed" (43). Michael Quigley in a recent Ph.D. dissertation observes the quality and is depressed by it. Quigley finds that White's rhetoric undercuts his ideology, and White ends up supporting a system that he is opposed to.

In the children's stories White does insist that the real focus of existence is in Mr. McGregor's garden and not in Mrs. Rabbit's comfortable home. He understates the tragedy of his vision by always finding a part of life that is not losable—always allowing the reader to think that maybe all is not mortal. It is for this reason that I think he gets only two cheers for telling the truth, for he does not tell it quite right. He puts his truth in such form that the real sadness of his view is hidden, and he does this so well that he fools even a great writer like Eudora Welty.

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* * *

The Mystery of the Golden Locket

by

Michelle Chapman

Once long ago lived a king and his precious young daughter named Monek, who was going to turn twelve soon. Her father had no idea what to get Monek. He had gotten her so many things already, that there was barely anything else to get her.

One cold and windy night some grave robbers came to the cemetery and began to dig up a grave. When they hit something solid, they pulled it up and found a wooden coffin. They opened it. Inside it they found a body and some jewels. They took the jewels and ran off.

The next day the thieves sold the jewelry to a merchant. They got quite a bit of money for the jewelry. The following day the King came to the shop, looking for a gift for Monek. He asked the old merchant if he had items that might interest him. The merchant pulled out a gold locket. The King picked it up and looked it over. The King asked if it was real gold. He told him to see for himself. The King put it in his mouth and bit it. The King told the merchant to gift wrap it and send it to his palace at noon tomorrow.

The next day at noon, the merchant gave the King the fine wrapped package. Monek had a great time at her party. She was delighted with the present her father had given her.

Later she went outside to a pond near the palace. She was very excited about the new locket. She sat under an old shadow tree. Then all of a sudden a shadow appeared. It was short, round, and plump.

The shadow said, "That is a very fine locket you have there."

Monek was surprised and at the same time scared. She really didn't know what to say.

"Don't be afraid. I just came to talk, and I didn't mean to startle you." He sat down. "I know I've seen that locket before," the shadow said mysteriously to the girl. "If I recall correctly, that locket belonged to a very powerful and wealthy man. He was a good friend of mine about twenty to twenty-five years ago."

Monek was confused. She thought she had been the only one that had worn the mysterious locket. Monek told the shadow to continue with the story.

The shadow began again: "The man who once owned the locket put his money in a secret safe, but never told anyone its location or the combination. But then something dreadful happened. One night two cruel young men shot him. From what I've heard, the men threatened to kill him, if he didn't tell them the combination, but for some strange reason, they didn't ask where the safe was."

"So that means they knew where the safe was," said Monek.

"The man wore that same locket you are wearing now every second of his life. He was still wearing it when he was buried," the shadow said.

In 1990-91, Michelle was in Bonnie Farrar's fifth-grade class at Williamsburg Independent School in Williamsburg, Kentucky. The above short story won third-place in the short story competition at the Fantasy Fair.

Confused, Monek asked, "How did I get this locket if he was buried with it?"

The shadow said very quickly, "Grave robbers. Still, you're very lucky getting such a fine piece of jewelry once owned by a nice and powerful man."

Monek told the shadow that she must be heading back to the palace before her father got worried. As she was leaving, she told the shadow that she would be at the shadow tree the same time tomorrow. Monek left and went home.

After dinner, she went to bed thinking about all the things the shadow had said. She was just about asleep when she heard a thump at her window. She lay very still until the sound went away. Then the window opened. Two guys were climbing through the window, when the alarm went on. The men climbed back out the window and ran away, chased by the castle dogs. The King came in to see if Monek was all right. She was just a little shaken up.

The next morning, she awoke to hear hammering at her window. The workers were putting up metal bars. She went downstairs and saw two men talking seriously to her father. She stood there and listened to what they were saying.

One of the men said, "I could guard the room at night."

The other man said, "I can guard the window."

Monek walked by her father and told him good morning, and then she went to the dining room for breakfast. After breakfast, she went to the shadow tree.

The shadow appeared and told her she was in great danger. "The men that were talking to your father were the ones who killed the owner of the locket. I don't really know why they're here, but it has something to do with that locket," the shadow said.

Monek took off the locket and handed it to the shadow. Immediately the locket opened! Inside were numbers that looked like a combination to a safe. The shadow said in excitement, "This is the combination to the safe! You have to get rid of it before the men find it."

Monek agreed. She kept the locket and that night she returned it to the man's grave.

The men who were to guard Monek's door and window were sent to jail after Monek told her father about their plot.

How the Porcupine Got His Quills

by

Jessica Faught

Porky Porcupine was sitting at his "thinking seat," a branch in a huge fallen pine tree. He was thinking about how defenseless porcupines were. They had sharp teeth, but that was about it. Fur wasn't much help when it came to defending yourself.

"I wish we had a special weapon," said Porky aloud. "The skunk has his odor to scare away predators, and the turtle has his shell to hide in, but us porcupines don't have anything!" (You see, at the time, porcupines didn't have quills.)

Porky thought and thought, but he couldn't come up with any good ideas. It was starting to get dark, so Porky went on home to his snug little house in the forest. It had begun to rain but Porky didn't think much about it as he scampered on home.

The next morning it was still raining. Now Porky was a little worried. There were large puddles gathering, and he knew it would soon be hard to find food. Porky and the other porcupines all ate vegetation and tree bark. Since they couldn't climb trees, they didn't often eat tree bark, though. Porky decided he had better go look for food now, in case of a flood. He got his umbrella and went to go look for some "green vegetation." Already food was getting scarce. He got a reasonable amount of food and started on his way home.

Then, all of a sudden, a mountain lion appeared in the way of Porky's path.

"Oh, no!" thought Porky. The mountain lion was his worst enemy. He had injured several porcupines in the past. But to Porky's dismay and relief, the mountain lion didn't even seem to notice him. Porky took advantage of this and ran off down the hill to his hole. He had made it! Wow!

He got to thinking later that night as it rained harder and harder though, "What if the lion had seen me? What could I have done?" This scared Porky because he would have been helpless. He probably couldn't have done anything to save himself from the evil lion. He decided to call the head porcupine for a meeting of the Prickly Porcupine Personnel the next morning. He wanted to discuss with the other porcupines their persistent problem.

The next morning Porky got up early to go to the meeting. It hardly helped at all. No one came up with any good ideas.

Meanwhile, the rain was getting harder. At times, there was even hail. Porky was running out of food again. The wind was blowing fiercely now, too. Some animals were left homeless because of the wind damage.

Porky finally got up the courage to go out and hunt for food again. He was desperate. All he had left was four dried leaves, a dandelion, and a tree branch. He had never seen a storm that bad in his life. He called the Prickly Porcupine Personnel and all the porcupines went out to look for food together.

In 1990-91, Jessica was a seventh-grade student in Bonnie Farrar's class at Williamsburg Independent School in Williamsburg, Kentucky. Her short story won first place in the short story competition at the Fantasy Fair, and grand prize for the best written piece.

The weather was absolutely terrible, especially the wind. The porcupines trudged along with Porky in the lead. There was thunder and lightning, too. The porcupines had sacks with them for food, but not one porcupine could fill his bag even halfway. Finally the porcupines gave up and started their journey back. They were about halfway there when they heard a loud CREAK!. The porcupines looked up and realized three giant pine trees were about to land on them. There was a cry of fear from someone and then a huge thud as the trees fell on the porcupines.

"Ouch!" they screamed.

Porky climbed out from under the tree and went to help his friends. To his surprise, none were hurt! But as Porky took a closer look he realized all the porcupines (including himself) had pine needles stuck in their backs!

"They're pine needles!" said Porky, half laughing, half crying. It didn't really hurt, but the idea of pine needles stuck in his back wasn't very comforting, either.

"Hey!" said Porky, "We have something to defend ourselves with now!"

"Yeah!" cried all the porcupines.

"Now if we are attacked by an animal, we can just poke them with our needles. It will definitely wound them," said Porky.

Porky slept well that night (except when his needles poked the waterbed, and he had to spend an hour and a half sopping up water with a towel).

The next morning he was glad to see that it had stopped raining. He could go get more food, and if he ran into any enemies, he could poke them with his needles, which he'd decided to call quills. Basically, the storm had been worth it! It had changed the porcupine forever!

Cinquains about Charlotte

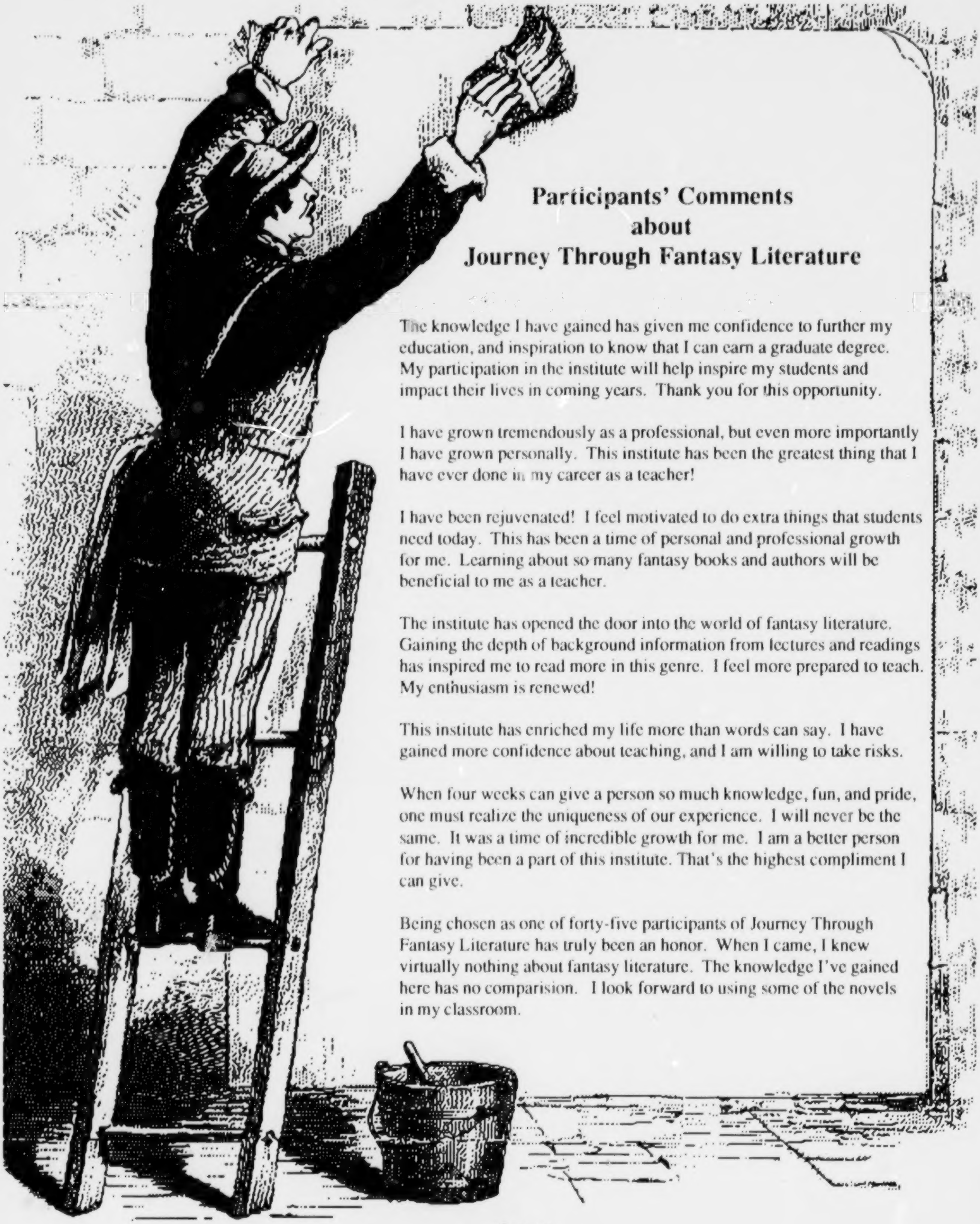
SPIDER
Friendly, cheerful
Crawling, catching, looking
Humbly giving her time
CHARLOTTE

—by Doug Archer

CHARLOTTE
Intelligent, creative
Spinning, writing, crawling
Saved Wilbur from dying
SPIDER

—by Laura Carper

Doug and Laura were fourth-grade students in Lynn Strickland's class at Fairmont Elementary School in Johnson City, Tennessee. Doug's cinquain "Charlotte" won second place in the second- through fourth-grade division of the Poetry Competition at the Fantasy Fair. Laura's cinquain won third place in the same division.



Participants' Comments about Journey Through Fantasy Literature

The knowledge I have gained has given me confidence to further my education, and inspiration to know that I can earn a graduate degree. My participation in the institute will help inspire my students and impact their lives in coming years. Thank you for this opportunity.

I have grown tremendously as a professional, but even more importantly I have grown personally. This institute has been the greatest thing that I have ever done in my career as a teacher!

I have been rejuvenated! I feel motivated to do extra things that students need today. This has been a time of personal and professional growth for me. Learning about so many fantasy books and authors will be beneficial to me as a teacher.

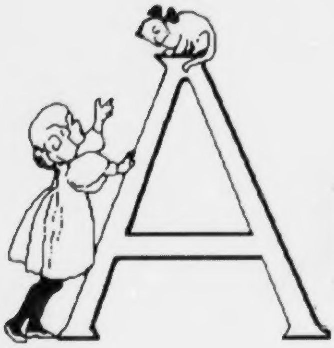
The institute has opened the door into the world of fantasy literature. Gaining the depth of background information from lectures and readings has inspired me to read more in this genre. I feel more prepared to teach. My enthusiasm is renewed!

This institute has enriched my life more than words can say. I have gained more confidence about teaching, and I am willing to take risks.

When four weeks can give a person so much knowledge, fun, and pride, one must realize the uniqueness of our experience. I will never be the same. It was a time of incredible growth for me. I am a better person for having been a part of this institute. That's the highest compliment I can give.

Being chosen as one of forty-five participants of Journey Through Fantasy Literature has truly been an honor. When I came, I knew virtually nothing about fantasy literature. The knowledge I've gained here has no comparision. I look forward to using some of the novels in my classroom.

III



APPROACHES

You unlock [the memory box] by getting somebody to help you unlock it.

Mostly it comes from books, though I have had a long series of magnificent teachers.

—Campbell, The Power of Myth

The material included in this chapter illustrates the durability and adaptability of fantasy literature. The first essay, by Jack Knowles, demonstrates that fantasy is, on the one hand, a genre as old and durable as "Those Fantastic Classics": Homer's *Odyssey*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels.* On the other hand, fantasy holds up under the most modern critical scrutiny, as illustrated by Ron Giles' application of reader-response criticism to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.*

The last two essays in the chapter argue for the adaptability of fantasy. Mary Manning and Judy Byers both stress the connection between fantasy and the oral tradition, particularly Byers who had great success in introducing her cluster group to West Virginia folk tales. In addition to the connection between fantasy and folk literature, Manning—a strong advocate of using poetry in the classroom—argues that fantasy is a natural companion to verse. *The Hobbit*, with its riddles and songs, is a perfect example.

This same adaptability is also made clear in the approaches to using fantasy in the classroom, all of which demonstrate two important points. The first is that fantasy is appropriate at all grade levels. Linda Mainland's first-graders enjoyed *Gulliver's Travels* every bit as much as Cesily King's eighth-graders enjoyed *The Wizard of Earthsea.* Amy Teague's success with *Tuck Everlasting* in Chapter I reading classes is a clear indication that fantasy can be used with all ages and abilities.

The second point is that fantasy literature is perfect for literature-across-the-curriculum incentives. In addition to the traditional writing assignments that are generated in language arts classes, these teachers' students wrote an impressive variety of poetry—songs, haiku, cinquains, ballads, jump-rope rhymes, cheers, raps—short fiction, and letters. Students were also involved in dramatics through writing scripts, creating puppets, and performing. The striking feature of the approaches is that without specifically saying so, these teachers have made a clear argument for using literature throughout the curriculum to teach not just reading and writing, but art, math, science, and sophisticated analytical skills as well.

But the most important element of this chapter, in addition to durability and adaptability, is "enjoyability." These teachers repeatedly stress the **fun** of using fantasy. Jeannene Thompson says her second-graders were "captivated from the beginning" with Charlotte and Wilbur. Earlene Misener describes the "high energy of learning" among her sixth-graders when they read *The Indian in the Cupboard.* She asks, "Would my class have been like this anyway? Maybe, but I think that having Little Bear and Boone around made a difference."

RTH

Those Fantastic Classics

by
Jack Knowles

The "classics"—those monumental works of Western literature whose titles evoke reverence, strike fear, or promise boredom to millions of bright- and not-so-bright-eyed students across the land—are filled with the fantastic. Their retelling can, in fact should, be an integral part of early childhood story times and middle school language arts classes, both because they are sources of great pleasure and because children should know the culture that has shaped them, for good or ill. Like all literature, the "great books" should be viewed by teachers and students with a critical eye, not just admired. While we celebrate Odysseus' perseverance, we mustn't ignore the sexual double standard under which he and Penelope operate. To insist that the great stories in the Western tradition should be told, read, heard again and again is not to insist that all of their values be embraced—impossible in any case, since they don't express a monolithic value system. Rather, it is to insist that we must know our past in order to come to terms with it, preserving some aspects and rejecting others.

The ancient Greeks should be invited into our classrooms from kindergarten on. In the course of a year, we might choose the most tellable myths from a text like Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*, or we could focus on one ancient masterpiece such as Homer's *Odyssey*. Books 9 though 12 of the latter are especially rich in fantasy. Here we find the lotus-eaters who offer Odysseus' men a mind-bending blossom that destroys any interest they might have in returning home—sounds familiar, doesn't it? Later comes the hero's encounter with the Cyclops, a classic tale of brains versus brawn. The graphic description of how the Cyclops is blinded may be a bit rough for youngsters (even those raised on Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle lore?), but they can surely enjoy the humor in Odysseus' fooling his dumbo opponent by telling him his name is "Noman." Circe and the dangers of "pigging out," the Sirens and their fatal attraction, the terrible choice represented by Scylla and Charybdis—these and many more adventures are part of Odysseus' journey home to the land he loves.

The Romans so loved the stories of Homer that they tied their own history to the Trojan War by telling of Aeneas, one of the princes of Troy, who was ordered by the gods to leave the burning city and to take his people back to their ancestral homeland in Italy. When Vergil related this story in *The Aeneid*, he imitated *The Odyssey*, as in Book 3 when Aeneas' ships sail past Charybdis and land on the island of the Cyclops. He went on to tell the great love story of Dido and Aeneas (Book 4), to describe an incredible visit to the underworld (Book 6), and to show how Aeneas does his duty, even when it makes him miserable (especially in Book 4)—an idea that challenges the "look-out-for-number-one" pleasure principle that dominates contemporary American culture.

Jack Knowles is professor of English and director of the humanities program at Milligan College, where he earned his undergraduate degree. He holds a master's and doctorate in English from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. His special interests include Renaissance and Restoration drama. He was awarded a sabbatical for 1992-93, during which he will spend the Michaelmas Term at Oxford.

The battle-hardened hero Beowulf should be another visitor to our classrooms. His epic includes some of the most vivid descriptions ever written. Even fairly young children can enjoy selections from Burton Raffel's excellent translation, such as the portrayal of the monstrous Grendel:

> That shadow of death hunted in the darkness
> Stalked Hrothgar's warriors, old
> And young, lying in waiting, hidden
> In mist, invisibly following them from the edge
> Of the marsh, always there, unseen. (28)

Among the many other powerful passages are Beowulf's answer to Unferth at the end of Part 8 and the beginning of Part 9, the battle against Grendel in Part 11, and the description of the lair of the monsters in Part 21.

After the darkness, mists, and monstrosities of *Beowulf,* our students need the lively wit of Geoffrey Chaucer. A wonderfully winning piece is his "Nun's Priest's Tale," a beast fable in the tradition of Aesop. Starring Chanticleer, the chivalric rooster, his paramour, Pertelote, and the vicious villain, Sir Russel Fox, the tale is a drama of flattery and betrayal. The story is highly entertaining simply as a story, but it can also be used to teach the literary game called "mock epic" in which a trivial subject is treated in a heroic style. Students will pick up the humor if we accentuate the melodrama inherent in the fable, as in this description of our hero, Chanticleer:

> Grim as a lion's was his manly frown
> As on his toes he sauntered up and down;
> He scarcely deigned to set his foot to ground
> And every time a seed of corn was found
> He gave a chuck, and up his wives ran all.
> Thus royal as a prince who strides his hall
> Leave we this Chanticleer engaged on feeding
> And pass to the adventure that was breeding. (242)

By giving them a little help, we might even get our charges to recognize that there is a thread here that leads to Monty Python.

More fantasy for our story times can be found in Shakespeare. *The Tempest,* for example, is the story of Prospero the magician, who has been exiled to an island inhabited by a monster named Caliban and spirits like Ariel. Prospero creates the illusion of a shipwreck, produces strange sounds, makes banquets disappear, and finally brings about love, reconciliation, and release by the end of the play. For younger children, there are several paraphrased versions of Shakespeare available (see bibliography). Though they lack the magic of Shakespeare's powerful verse (a matter of sound as well as sense), they are nonetheless helpful in teaching children to love the stories he tells—a first step towards the fuller pleasure with Shakespeare that awaits them as adults.

One more English visitor who must be invited to our classrooms is Jonathan Swift, whose *Gulliver's Travels* has enjoyed huge popularity with both young and old since its appearance in the eighteenth century. Best known is Book 1, where Gulliver finds himself among six-inch people and plays the hero until he mortally offends the empress by tinkling on her palace in order to save it from destruction by fire. But students would also love the tales of the Brobdingnagians, the gentle giants of Book 2, some of the episodes set on and beneath the floating island of Laputa in Book 3, and the stories of the wise horses named Houyhnhnms in Book 4.

Finally, our literary guest list would be incomplete if it didn't include the satirical idealist, Cervantes. Walter Starkie has done a good abridgement and translation of that Spanish masterpiece of the fantastic, *Don Quixote*, which would be usable in junior high and high school. For younger students, we can translate the translation so that our audience can delight in the tales of the skinny farmer who read so many romances that he turned his brains into scrambled eggs and thought he was a knight. He and his pudgy little sidekick, Sancho Panza, as they ride forth to do heroic battle with windmills, wineskins, and sheep, will not soon be forgotten.

If we know the classics ourselves, we can make them come alive in our own language as we tell their stories to children of all ages. And if our students have fun with those tales in their youth, they'll enjoy the great books much more readily when they hit the originals. More importantly, they will have met some of the most basic questions, problems, and pleasures of human existence. And you have to meet them before you can beat them or joyfully greet them.

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Alice and The Reader: Duo in Wonderland

by
Ronald K. Giles

In chapter 4 of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* the chapter titled "The Rabbit Sends in a Little Bill," Alice says: "When I used to read fairy tales, I fancied that kind of thing never happened, and now here I am in the middle of one" (40). Alice knows that she is **in** a fairy tale, and thus we have what Alice herself might call a "curious" predicament: she is clever enough to know better, but credulous enough to play along. In terms of narrative technique, this counterpoise between belief and disbelief represents one of Lewis Carroll's distinct achievements in the novel. It creates the linear tension along which Carroll constructs the elements of plot. And although one **hears** Alice telling so much of her own story within the quotation marks, it is the outside narrator, using the third person, on whom one depends for all of the textual information—with, of course, the auxiliary imagery charmingly provided by Sir John Tenniel.

A striking feature of the text is how often the narrator enters it in his self-conscious voice. For example, on page 101, the third paragraph contains a parenthetical insertion where the narrator refers the reader to the frontispiece. Or, on page 88, the narrator gratuitously intrudes when he says: "(If you don't know what a Gryphon is, look at the picture.)" This attempt to divide the readership—between those who do know what a Gryphon is, and those who don't—is superfluous because the reader encounters the picture of the Gryphon in the text **before** he or she arrives at the parenthetical command. But the narrative effect lessens the distance between the writer and the reader, who is momentarily brought back to the present where looking at the frontispiece or the Gryphon would interrupt the linear process of reading.

Carroll's novel is an active text
that invites the reader
to participate.

Even in his storytelling voice, the narrator may project an image that clashes with an impression assigned to Alice. For example, when Alice catches the pig-baby, with its "arms and legs in all directions," the narrator says that she thought: "just like a star-fish." In the very next sentence, the narrator shifts his imagistic gears and says that "the poor little thing was snorting like a steam-engine when she caught it" (61). The reader must immediately convert the "star-fish" image to the "steam-engine" image. Thus, to come to the point, Carroll's novel is an active text, one that, even in its basic narrative structure, invites the reader to participate in making the way it means.

Accordingly, I propose to discuss *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in light of what is called "reader-response" criticism. That is, I take the position, as it has been stated by Stanley Fish, that "Interpretation is not the

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One reads not in an intellectual vacuum but in the sway of his or her beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes.

art of construing but the art of constructing" (327). In short, Fish says that meaning emerges when a "text is interrogated by a series of related questions—What is the reader doing? What is being done to him? For what purpose?—questions that follow necessarily from the assumption that the text is not a spatial object but the occasion for a temporal experience" (345). This school of criticism then recognizes what would seem to be self-evident: reading is an activity, something that one does over time. Furthermore, one reads not in an intellectual vacuum but in the sway of his or her beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes.

We may, of course, share opinions and strategies that lead to similar interpretations based on traditions and conventions. We have, for example, come to regard an ode as a stately, rather dignified form of lyric expression, and thus we form certain expectations when we first encounter that word in the title of a poem—say, "Ode to Winter." The ode may well turn out to be ironic—not in praise of winter but in denunciation of it. But, again, that interpretation will owe its character to our shared assumptions about winter and the words used in the poem to characterize it. So, without bogging too far down in theory (though I do recommend Wolfgang Iser's *Act of Reading*, 1978), I want to mention a few principles of method, lest anyone think that reader-response criticism merely throws a text up for grabs.

A reader-response critic, in his or her reaction to the text, notes particularly what Fish calls its "patterns of expectation and disappointment, reversals of direction, traps, invitation to premature conclusions, textual gaps, delayed revelation, temptation, all of which are related to a corresponding set of authors' intentions, of strategies designed to educate the reader or humiliate him or confound him" (344-45). So, as a matter of method, the reader-response critic attempts to locate the place where the reader collaborates with the text by filling in the gaps, by projecting the images that the text stimulates in its temporal dimension, or by responding to, as Iser calls it, "a demand for fulfillment which the text itself produces" (149).

This approach differs rather dramatically with the "New Criticism" that has been, since the 1940s, the generally prevailing method of literary interpretation in college classrooms. Whereas New Critical formalism concentrates on the text, considering it an object that, if it is good, reveals an "organic unity" that defines the aesthetic experience, "reader-response" shifts attention to the reader, considering his or her reactions as a reciprocal function: an encounter with a text to which the reader brings an emotional and philosophical disposition, and the story's provocative narrator, from whom the reader receives the literary matrix (metaphor, symbol, imagery, etc.) within which the aesthetic experience takes shape.

Turning to *Alice*, one discovers that the text contains many of the "blanks" or "gaps" that Fish mentions, and they occur as part of the narrative structure that I referred to at the beginning. It appears that Carroll meant to start, but leave incomplete, several stories within a story. And, furthermore, I suggest that Carroll then relies on the reader's imagination, as a function of that reader's involvement, to complete the text. Thus, as a reader-response critic would say, the **meaning** of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is inseparable from a **reading** of it.

In his book titled *Lewis Carroll*, Richard Kelly comes close to the point when he says: "Wonderland stimulates the senses and the mind. It is a *monde fatale*, so to speak, one that seduces Alice (and the reader) to seek new sights, new conversations, new ideas, but it never satisfies her" (75). Though Kelly does not pursue this particular facet of the text, the incomplete narratives within the story are certainly seductive. Chapter 2, "The Pool of Tears," closes with the mouse saying "in a low, trembling voice, 'Let us get to the shore, and then I'll tell you my history, and you'll understand why it is I hate cats and dogs'" (30). Here we have the first instance of a character, the mouse, promising to tell us a story that has a specific point to it: "why it is I hate cats and dogs." But, when the mouse begins to speak in the next chapter, he embarks on a long, dry historical narrative about William the Conqueror, thus thwarting our expectation on one score, but rewarding them on another, because Alice says in the preceding chapter that "I daresay it's a French mouse, come over with William the Conqueror" (28). So here we see the active nature of the text, as it foreshadows and then fulfills on the one hand, while it anticipates but then suspends on the other.

After the caucus-race, the main narrative returns to the mouse's story. The concrete poem, shaped like a mouse's tail, reflects what Alice is thinking while the mouse "resumes his sad tale," which he interrupts to accuse Alice of "not attending." Alice pleads with the mouse to "finish your story," but the mouse walks away. The reader is left to fill in the gap, to imagine what the mouse's "sad tale" may have revealed, particularly because the tale concerns not why he **fears** cats and dogs but why he **hates** cats and dogs. Significantly, Carroll underscores the point for us in the climactic sentence of the chapter when Alice "again heard a little pattering of footsteps in the distance, and she looked up eagerly, half hoping that the Mouse had changed his mind, and was coming back to finish his story" (37).

"A Mad Tea-Party" is another unfinished story.

In Chapter 7, "A Mad Tea-Party," there is another unfinished story, another open invitation for the reader to complete what Carroll leaves teasingly unresolved. Because Alice doesn't know a story (and she might, had she paid attention to the mouse), the March Hare and the Hatter desire that the Dormouse shall tell a story. The Dormouse begins his story about the three sisters who lived at the bottom of a treacle-well. When Alice says, "There's no such thing!" the "Dormouse sulkily remark[s] 'If you can't be civil, you'd better finish the story for yourself'" (72). *You'd better finish the story for yourself*—and that is precisely what the reader must do, for the Dormouse never reaches a conclusion. The reader knows that the sisters "drew all manner of things—everything that begins with an M— . . . such as mouse-traps, and the moon, and memory, and muchness—you know you say things are 'much of a muchness'" (73). And, this time, Alice walks away after the Hatter rudely tells her that she "shouldn't talk." So the conflict or problem—the sisters are ill, and that's why we have a story in the first place—is never resolved. I'll tell you how I finish the story: I think the three sisters drew some medicine, which starts with an M, and then they took the medicine which made them well in their well, and there they lived happily ever after, which is the sort of ending I like for a story that begins with these three words: "Once upon a time" (71). But, then, that's just me.

Chapter 9 even seems to promise in its title, "The Mock Turtle's Story," that we will finally hear a complete narrative. The Queen invites Alice and us (the readers) to "Come on then . . . and he shall tell you his history" (87). The Queen leaves Alice with the Gryphon who introduces her to the Mock Turtle, who begins his story with this interest-generating assertion: "Once . . . I was a real turtle" (89). But the rest of the chapter tells about what the Turtle and the Gryphon learned in school, and Chapter 10 presents "The Lobster-Quadrille." But this chapter, significantly, begins with the Mock

Turtle sighing and sobbing, recalling that his story is sad, and thus the Mock Turtle maintains his tone, but not his purpose. We never hear how he changed from a real turtle. And, in fact, the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon turn the tables on Alice, asking her to tell some of her adventures. She responds: "'I could tell you my adventures—beginning from this morning,' said Alice a little timidly; 'but it's no use going back to yesterday, because I was a different person then'" (97). *Because I was a different person then.* It is almost as if Carroll glosses it for us: the Mock Turtle cannot tell about his sad metamorphosis because he was a different turtle then. The chapter ends with the Mock Turtle singing another song, titled "Turtle Soup," in which, as Kelly says, "he ironically celebrates the beautiful soup he is destined to become" (89). The real story is his present predicament. The cover story—the one that we never hear the conclusion to—is the one that begins, "Once . . . I was a real turtle."

Even inconsistencies in the text may be part of the writer's request that the reader make accommodations with it, perhaps as a reflection of what is happening in the text. In such cases, the reader, as Fish phrases it, must "enact in his responses the very subject matter" of the text (345). A formalist might look at the inconsistency and consider it a flaw, the writer's failure to integrate elements of the plot into an organic whole. However, the reader-response critic might well say that the inconsistency represents an attempt to make the reader, in his or her temporal relationship with the text, experience the subject matter firsthand. For example, consider the scene where the croquet game is in progress: "Alice began to feel very uneasy: to be sure, she had not as yet had any dispute with the Queen, but she knew that it might happen any minute, 'and then,' thought she, 'what would become of me?'" (80). What the narrator says here is clearly untrue. Alice and the Queen have had a dispute, and rather recently, at the point where the Queen asks Alice about the gardeners:

> "And who are *these*?" said the Queen, pointing to the three gardeners who were lying round the rose-tree. . . .
>
> "How should I know?" said Alice, surprised at her own courage. "It's no business of *mine*."
>
> The Queen turned crimson with fury, and, after glaring at her for a moment like a wild beast, began screaming "Off with her head! Off with—"
>
> "Nonsense!" said Alice, very loudly and decidedly, and the Queen was silent. (77)

Indeed, she has had a dispute with the Queen and, furthermore, a dispute that she rather easily resolved in her favor by silencing the Queen with the exclamation, "Nonsense!" So when only two pages later the narrator says that "she had not as yet had any dispute with the Queen," the reader knows that it just isn't so. Lewis Carroll, a careful writer, is not apt to mix, in such close proximity, these narrative signals. As Fish suggests, the reader, aware of the contradiction, enacts in his or her response the subject matter of the text: that matter being the narrator's falsehood, and that response being exactly the same as Alice's—"Nonsense!" It is not a criticism of the text; it is a collaboration with it, and phrased in the same spirit. In this response, the reader makes the same sort of accommodation with the text that Alice must continually make with Wonderland.

The incomplete narratives anticipate very well the concluding chapter, titled "Alice's Evidence." Finally, we have a complete narrative, or, that is, a complete poem, read by the White Rabbit at the trial of the Knave of Hearts. The White Rabbit asks the King, "Where shall I begin, please your majesty?" And the King responds with excellent storytelling advice: "Begin at the beginning . . . and go on till you come to the end: then stop" (111). Of course, this is all part of the fun. Carroll sets up a situation that, at long last, promises a complete story, beginning:

> They told me you had been to her,
>   And mentioned me to him:
> She gave me a good character,
>   But said I could not swim. (111)

Every line in the poem, separately read, is perfectly comprehensible. But even so finished a story as this plays to mixed reviews. The King says, "That's the most important piece of evidence we've heard yet." But Alice says, "I don't believe there's an atom of meaning in it." Well, there you go; everybody wants to be a critic.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland will remain a classic not just of children's literature but of English literature because it is a text that offers the reader a temporal experience charged with potentialities for meaning, meaning that emerges when a given reader, subject to all of the conditioning that results from educational, cultural, and social influence, takes the book in hand. If you want me to tell you how many different responses qualify as an interpretation of *Alice,* then just tell me how many times it has been read.

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My Fantasy Journey

by

Bonnie Farrar

"My Fantasy Journey" is a presentation Ms. Farrar has given to teachers, parents, grandparents, and the general public. Through the use of props, costumes, and readings from children's fantasy books, she shows adults how enthralling this genre of children's literature can be. She provides a reading list to the audience and reports that "grandparents thank her for teaching them the best fantasy books to give their grandchildren."

"My, my, such a storm out there. I just got caught in a down draft and was blown off course. Oh, by the way, Lamb, there is such a thing as a tesseract."

Thus Mrs. Whatsit entered the lives of Meg Murry, her small brother Charles Wallace, and her mother. Mrs. Whatsit and her two sisters, Mrs. Which and Mrs. Who, take the children to find their father. And this story continues to entice readers while teaching them bits and pieces of math and science as they travel into the fifth dimension.

Meg Murry's journey is just beginning, but my journey began forty-one years ago on my eighth birthday when my grandmother gave me a copy of *The Little Colonel Stories* written by Annie Fellows Johnston whose home was just down the lane from mine in PeeWee Valley, Kentucky. The real Little Colonel, Hattie Cochran Dick, had lived in the house that was my home, and as I opened the pages of this book and began to read, that world became familiar to me again. Please let me take you on a mini-journey through the world I've discovered in fantasy literature.

One of my favorite stories is *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White. Charlotte is a gray spider who resides in the eaves of the barn on Zuckerman's farm. There is nothing very unusual about that, but the tale of Charlotte has opened the door to life on the farm for many young readers. Wilbur was a spring pig, the runt of the litter, who was rescued from a premature death by Fern and later became her friend. Of course, as time passed Wilbur grew and Fern was persuaded to let her uncle have him to raise. But Fern, to her mother's dismay, retained visiting privileges. One warm summer night Wilbur met Charlotte. He was just recovering from an unsuccessful escape attempt and was very lonely. Thus began the friendship that was to bring Wilbur to fame and help him to learn the meaning of true friendship. This book is a great favorite of children, but it also is a wonderful teacher of friendship.

The next place on our journey is a book by Lynne Reid Banks, *The Indian in the Cupboard.* Bright Star can tell you her own story:

> I am Bright Star of the Iroquois tribe and this is my husband, Little Bear. This is really his story but I will share it with you. A young boy named Omri was having a birthday and his best friend, Patrick, had given him a secondhand plastic Indian for a gift. Omri had biscuit tins full of plastic figures, and he was getting tired of them. Omri's older brother Gillon found Omri's plastic Indian in the alley behind their home. Omri had locked his toy inside a small, white metal cupboard, the type used over basins in old-fashioned bathrooms. The cupboard had a keyhole that was just the size of the key his mother had been saving from her grandmother's jewel box.

> Omri was very happy and content. He was just dropping off to sleep when he heard a little noise . . . a pattering, tapping, scrabbling, high-pitched noise that sounded like a tiny voice. Omri wiggled the cupboard and cautiously opened the door. Thus began Little Bear's journey into the twentieth century.

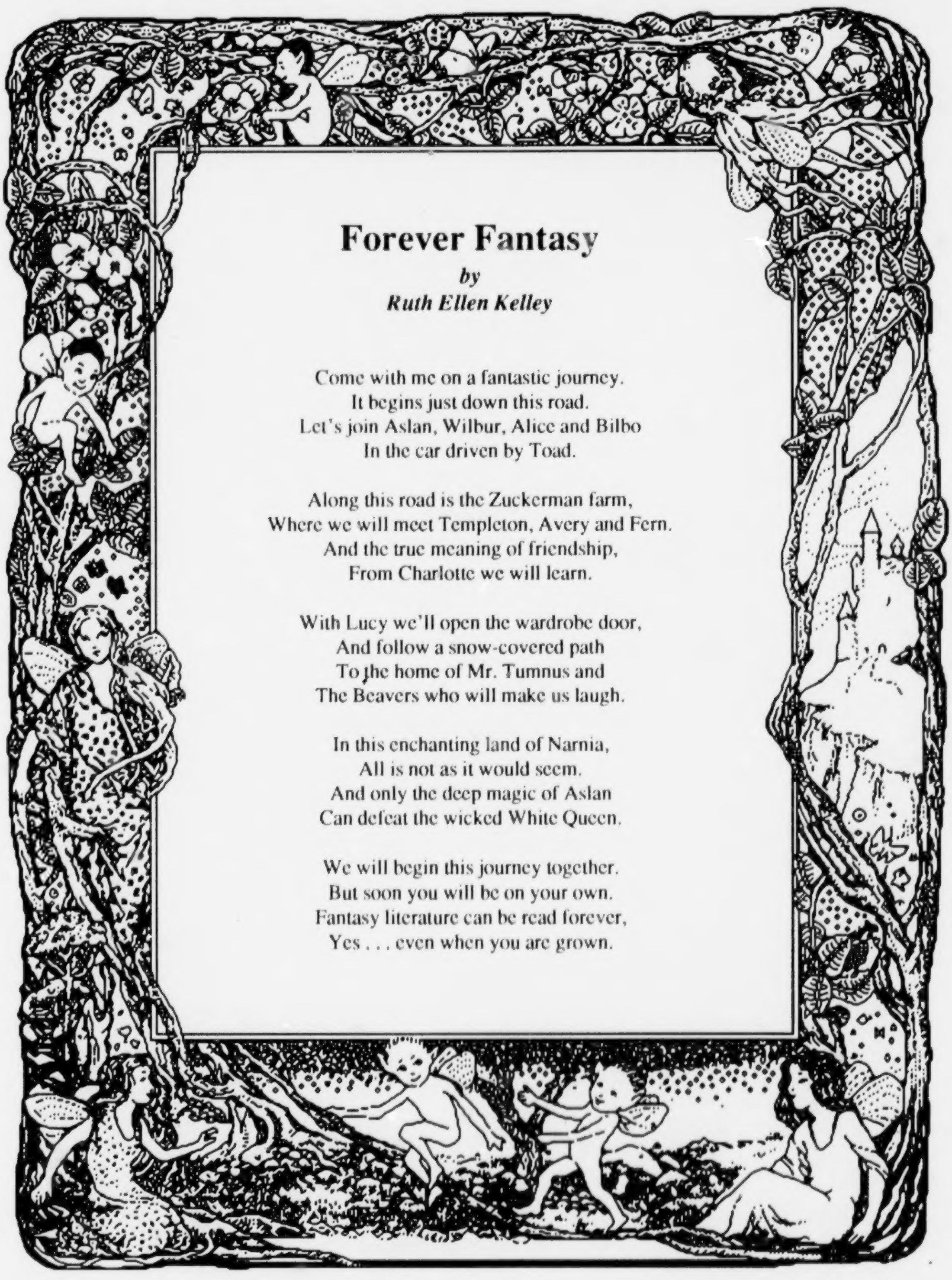
The rest of *The Indian in the Cupboard* tells of all the troubles Omri and Patrick get into as they decide whether to make any other plastic figures come alive. The story delves into the areas of right versus wrong as Omri learns the lessons of caring for another living being.

The next stop on our journey takes us to the land just outside your backdoor. It is the land of *Rabbit Hill* written by Robert Lawson. The story begins with a most auspicious rumor that New Folks are coming to the Big House. It has been three years since there has been anyone living on the place. This book is a favorite of mine because our family moved into a house on a hill that had been empty for three years. The story tells of the critters who had made the house their home and how they were in a panic that the New Folks might set traps or have a dog or even worse, a cat. The day finally came when the New Folks moved in and Willie Fieldmouse was perched on the window sill eavesdropping when he carelessly fell into the rain barrel. You can imagine the consternation of the rest of the animals when Willie failed to return. But more problems arose. On the night the animals gathered to divide up the garden, Willie's family—in appreciation for the Folks' saving Willie's life—proposed that a small portion of the garden be set aside for the exclusive use of the Folks. After much debate, the motion passed. All went well until . . . but I'll let you read the book to find the rest of the story and enjoy the beautiful ending.

One more stop on our journey takes us to the hills outside of Treegap and to meet a family by the name of Tuck. Mae Tuck had two sons, Jesse and Miles. Their lives were complicated by a ten-year-old girl named Winnie. It seems that Winnie in a fit of anger at being an only child decided to wander in the woods on the same August morning that Mae had gone to meet her sons. It had been most a year since she had seen them and they were coming home. But Winnie stumbled on Jesse just as he was reaching beneath the old oak tree and moving the pebbles so the spring would flow forth. Winnie was very thirsty and since the water was in the woods that her father owned, she demanded to have a drink. Jesse was just as insistent that she not drink from the spring. Why??

> Well, you see this here bottle. It looks like it is just full of the sweetest spring water you have ever drunk. But one sip and you live forever. That's how this book came to be called *Tuck Everlasting*, cause we Tuck are everlasting. That there boy over yonder mooning over the girl named Winnie looks to be only seventeen years old but in reality he be 117. He is trying to tell that there girl that she shouldn't drink the water until she is seventeen so they can get married and live forever after. Course you'll just have to read the book written by Natalie Babbitt to find out if she does.

All of these fantasy books are favorites with children, but reading is not the only thing children gain by enjoying books. Books open imaginations. Good classics create children who will love to read as adults. And a student who is turned on to reading has the potential for becoming much more. Who knows, in your classroom a future author may be waiting to escape!



Forever Fantasy

by
Ruth Ellen Kelley

Come with me on a fantastic journey.
It begins just down this road.
Let's join Aslan, Wilbur, Alice and Bilbo
In the car driven by Toad.

Along this road is the Zuckerman farm,
Where we will meet Templeton, Avery and Fern.
And the true meaning of friendship,
From Charlotte we will learn.

With Lucy we'll open the wardrobe door,
And follow a snow-covered path
To the home of Mr. Tumnus and
The Beavers who will make us laugh.

In this enchanting land of Narnia,
All is not as it would seem.
And only the deep magic of Aslan
Can defeat the wicked White Queen.

We will begin this journey together.
But soon you will be on your own.
Fantasy literature can be read forever,
Yes . . . even when you are grown.

Chapter I Classes Read *Tuck Everlasting*

by

Amy Teague

One of the projects my Chapter I reading classes did this year was to read *Tuck Everlasting*. Before we began reading the book, we predicted what we thought Winnie would do with the bottle of everlasting water. If students had already read the book, then they predicted what they would do with the water if they were in Winnie's shoes. Here are some of the responses:

Portia Dula said, "I would drink the water so I could live forever and ever. I would not have to worry about dying or getting hurt."

* * *

Jerome Corpening wished, "I would have given it to my great-grandmother so that she could have lived forever. She died when I was twelve, and I wish she was still here with us."

* * *

Holly Price said, "I would save the bottle until I liked the way I looked and then I would drink it. I would save some of it for my children."

* * *

Chad Fox responded, "She will not drink the stuff because there would be too many people in the world. She is going to throw it away."

* * *

Jamaine Mathes said, "I think she would drink it and stay the same size and not get older. She would get strong."

* * *

Jason Shatley responded, "If she drinks it she will never die and she will live forever. She might take over the world. She will grow and live for millions and billions of years."

* * *

Jacob Boggs said, "She will probably save it so if she has a parent that will die, she could use it on them."

* * *

Pamela Dean's response was, "Winnie probably would have drunk the water to see what it tasted like. If she drank it, she would never grow, or she might give it to someone that she didn't want to grow."

* * *

Dwaine Williams offered the following answer: "I think she drank some of it when she turned seventeen and gave the rest to other people. Then she married Jesse, and they lived happily ever."

Amy is a sixth-grade Chapter I reading teacher at Gamewell Middle School in Lenior, North Carolina. Since the institute, she has been working on a master's degree at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina.

First-Graders Pursue Giants and Little People

by Linda Mainland

The first-grade class at Sun Valley School has been on a wonderful six-week fantasy journey pursuing giants and little people. The journey began with students reading several giant stories from the basal reader. They wanted to hear stories about other giants, so we found similar versions of *Finn McCool* and *Lucky and the Giant* in the anthology *The Green Hills of Magic: West Virginia Folktales from Europe* complied by Ruth Ann Musick. This was the text our West Virginia Cluster Group used under the direction of Judith Byers at Fairmont State. We also found a retelling of *The Brave Little Tailor* in our school library. Discovering this story sent my students in search of more giant tales.

Occasionally we left the world of fantasy and found historical accounts of giants, such as the one about West Virginia's own Steel Driving John Henry. From the dozens of stories we read, the top three favorites were *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *The Little Boy's Secret* by David L. Harrison, and several versions of *Gulliver's Travels*. Although Finn McCool was not everyone's top favorite, students observed that he was an interesting giant, because he kept showing up from week to week in very different tales.

As you might suspect, *Gulliver's Travels* led us to stories about little people: elves, leprechauns, and the Munchkins in the Land of Oz.

We read *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Most of the students were familiar with this story from the movie, cartoons, records, and short condensed children's books. They found many differences from the original L. Frank Baum story (1900), including the color of Dorothy's shoes in the other versions. Students were also very perceptive in the questions they asked: "Why would the Tin Woodsman cry, if he didn't have a heart?" and "How could the Scarecrow figure how to do that, if he didn't have a brain?"

The class project consisted of the construction of a yellow brick road. Each child was in charge of designing a section of the road, using a sheet of yellow paper, a ruler, and a pencil. Every day we calculated the number of bricks drawn on each section and added them together for daily totals. On day eleven the road construction made its way to the field of deadly poppies. At that point we counted 9,832 bricks that reached one-third of the way around the school.

For a field trip, our class traveled to Charleston, West Virginia, in April to see a play version of *The Wizard of Oz*. To help prepare for our trip, we constructed our own stage with materials ordered from Dover Publishing Company. We also made masks, flannel board characters, and play props.

This has been a most rewarding year. My first-graders loved stories! They loved to listen to stories, to tell stories, to read stories, and to write stories. Most of them took a story book home every night and returned to class the next morning to tell their friends about it. So they were continually excited about reading! What I didn't expect with this group was seeing how proud they became of the stories they created. They saw and heard endless varieties of the same story. They even noted the differences in the visual and book versions of *The Wizard of Oz*. Through fantasy and good literature, the children used and stretched their creativity and analytical skills.

Linda teaches at Sun Valley School in Mercer County, Kentucky. Her bachelor's degree is from Concord College. She was named Outstanding Teacher at Sun Valley School in 1989.

Fantasy Classics Inspire Second-Graders

by

Jeannene Thompson

I had a wonderful experience this school year with the two classic children's books, *Charlotte's Web* and *The Borrowers*. I began my fantasy unit in January by reading *Charlotte's Web* each day until it was completed. I sent a note home before I began, explaining what my intentions were, and asking parents **not** to expose the children to the movie.

The students were captivated from the beginning. After we completed the book, I let them see the cartoon version and we compared the two. The book was their favorite. There were humorous instances in the book which were not included in the movie.

I worked with our school art teacher on a diorama project for both *Charlotte's Web* and *The Borrowers*. These took several weeks for completion. Also I offered students opportunities for writing story endings and original poems. (Examples of their reviews and haiku are below.)

When all of their projects were completed, we held an "open classroom" for the parents. Parents were thrilled to see displayed all of the poems, stories, and art projects the children had done.

My experience teaching these two children's classics was wonderful! I'm already making my plans for next year!

BOOK REVIEWS

The Borrowers

by Misty Griffith

The Borrowers was very funny. It was written by Mary Norton. I really liked the story a lot. The book is about some people who borrow, but they're really not people; they are very little. There are about five books of *The Borrowers*. I have not heard of four of the books. It took us about three weeks to read one book.

My favorite part is when Pod was climbing up the curtains. I wonder what happens in the other books. In the library somebody found another book; I think it was the second one. I wonder if they said anything about Eagletina?

My teacher is reading the second book. She said she really is enjoying the book. They never tell the name of the boy. All they said is THE BOY. The boy was taller than Pod. They had stamps for pictures. I really did like *The Borrowers*.

Charlotte's Web

by Misty Griffith

Charlotte's Web was written by E. B. White. It was very funny. I really enjoyed it a lot. At the end it was sad; Charlotte died. But it was happy too because when Charlotte died, she left her babies. All of the babies flew away but three of them stayed. Wilbur named the three babies. I really enjoyed the

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Jeannene teaches the second grade at Lone Jack Elementary School in Four Mile, Kentucky. A graduate of Union College, she chose to enter the teaching profession after rearing her children.

story. I finally got the *Charlotte's Web* book. So far it is getting better and better. At the first of the movie *Charlotte's Web*, it was good.

When Charlotte died, Wilbur was very sad. Charlotte wrote four things in her web. Wilbur never forgot Charlotte. Wilbur always thought about Charlotte. And the three babies thought about Charlotte, too. When Charlotte and Wilbur got to the fair, Charlotte said she wanted to look around, so she climbed up the web and looked around. She said, "Wilbur, there is another pig beside us." She said that she would go ask his name and find out more about him. His name was Uncle. He told Charlotte a joke. Charlotte said that she had heard better ones. (I really did like the book!)

Haiku

Charlotte's Web

Goose had three goslings.
All the sheep are beautiful.
Charlotte's babies flew.
—*by Damien Gibson*

Wilbur is so good.
The spiders were so little.
UNCLE is a pig.
—*by Eric Goodin*

Fern saw the goose egg.
The goslings are so little.
Goose eggs don't all hatch.
—*by Brandon Smith*

Templeton the rat,
Came in from eating outside,
and lay in the hay.
—*by Ran Dean*

Charlotte loves Wilbur.
She hates Templeton so much.
Charlotte died sadly.
—*by Tony Bays*

The goose had goslings.
They gave Templeton an egg.
It's a rotten egg!
—*by Robert Miller*

Charlotte died sadly.
She had many little girls.
I like this book now.
—*by Billy Collins*

Charlotte and Wilbur
Will be good friends forever,
As long as they live.
—*by Cindy Wagner*

Fern cares for Wilbur.
Charlotte's babies were pretty.
Templeton was fat.
—*by Amanda Brooks*

Templeton the rat,
Put the egg under the straw.
It broke and smelled bad.
—*by Shaun Collins*

When they were swinging,
Charlotte, Avery and Fern,
They turned flips on swings.
—*by Joseph King*

Charlotte and Wilbur
Friends for ever and ever.
I love both of them.
—*by Beth Brown*

The Borrowers

Kate is a nice girl.
Eagletina got murdered.
Pod works very hard.
—*by Ran Dean*

Homily was seen.
Pod was seen by a big boy.
Mrs. May is good.
—*by Billy Collins*

They needed a couch.
The Boy got furniture.
Homily liked him.
—*by Rosie Jean Girdner*

Pod works hard at home.
The cat ate Eagletina.
Lupy was nice.
—*by Robert Miller*

Homily was seen.
She hid underneath the floor.
The ratcatcher came.
—*by Stephanie Miracle*

Pod is her father.
Homily, her mother.
Who? Arrietty.
—*by Shannon Shelton*

Eagletina, lost.
Pod, a man who borrows.
Boy, got in trouble.
—*by Shaun Collins*

Creative Dramatics with Third-Graders: Turning Narrative Into Drama Using *The Wind in the Willows*

by

Robbin Sharpe Nuckolls

Dorothy Heathcote writes:

> It seems sensible to me that, if there is a way of making the world simpler and more understandable to children, why not use it? Dramatizing makes it possible to isolate an event or to compare one event with another, to look at events that have happened to other people in their places and times perhaps, or to look at one's own experience after the event, within the safety of knowing that just at this moment it is not really happening. (qtd. in Ross 41)

Drama allows children to explore situations without feeling threatened or becoming openly involved themselves. Emotions may surface safely because the event within the realm of drama is not real. Children and adults shy away from others' knowing about their personal lives, but through drama they can live or relive some of their own experiences and not claim them.

Creative dramatics not only allows us to explore the familiar and not-so-familiar through someone else's eyes, but it also encourages us to return to the basics of learning and exploring as we did as young children—through play. "Children enact their imaginary exploits by substituting themselves for others ('I'll be the mommy.') and make-do objects for the real things ('Pretend this is medicine.')" (Wagner 46). Why not teach children through their natural way of learning? They will not feel threatened if they are in a safe, familiar situation.

Teaching through dramatic play does pose a problem for some educators. They want to know what a child will learn by participating in creative dramatics. Several studies answer that question. First, Pellegrini's study of lower socio-economic kindergarten through second-grade classes shows that dramatic play has an effect on a wide range of language and cognitive skills. Pellegrini states that "children engaging in drama use literate language and thus are doing orally what they will later need to transfer to writing" (Wagner 48). Pellegrini also finds that kindergartners who participate regularly in dramatics have significantly higher scores in word and story comprehension and in understanding a variety of syntactic structures than those children who are exposed to little or no dramatic play. They even score higher on the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test, because through practical application children are better able to visualize the sentence structures, word and story comprehension, etc.

> Two studies by Henderson and Shanker (1978) and one by Strickland (1973) demonstrate that comprehension of literature can be more significantly improved through story dramatization than through skill activities in basal workbooks. (Wagner 50)

Finally, writers from the Nuffield Mathematics Project have this to say: "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand" (Cottrell 175).

Robbin teaches second grade at Elliston-Lafayette Elementary School in Elliston, Virginia. At the Fantasy Fair Robbin's class won first place for their performance of "*Charlotte's Web*—A Musical." Currently she is working on a master's degree in curriculum and instruction.

In my own experience using creative dramatics in the production of "*Charlotte's Web*—A Musical" with my second-grade classes, I observed students grasping concepts and sentence structures more easily and with greater understanding than through other means. Results of my second-graders' Iowa Test of Basic Skills were positive indicators that learning occurred through their involvement in dramatics: the two second-grade classes scored the highest in Montgomery County compared to all second grades.

Using creative dramatics across the curriculum

Benefits are not limited to young children, however. Creative dramatics can be beneficial to all grades and can be used across the curriculum. One activity designed to help students remember and expand vocabularies is suitable for language arts classes. Divide the class into groups of three or four students each, and give each group a vocabulary word from their weekly list to act out. The rest of the class tries to guess the vocabulary word. Continue this activity until all the words on the list have been acted out; then give the class a test on the definitions of the words (Miller 89-90). The premise here is that children show higher retention if they are given the opportunity to put into practice what they are learning. Otherwise, they only learn the material for the test or the grade, forgetting it quickly. (See Appendix A, page 115, for additional examples to use in language arts classes.)

Examples showing how creative dramatics can enhance any curriculum may be found in June Cottrell's book *Teaching With Creative Dramatics*. One example she discusses is the use of pantomiming in science classes (179). Invite students to pantomime certain properties of materials: show the heaviness, lightness, hardness, softness, flexibility, etc. of an object. Historical events read in textbooks can be dramatized (180). Finally, dramatizing mathematical word problems allows students to see and have a hands-on experience (182). Creative dramatics can teach lessons across the curriculum; only the approach is different.

"When I do, I understand" is an important point for teachers to remember when dealing with their students. I observed this "doing" versus explaining in my own classroom with one of my students who would not speak a word from the opening day of school in September. I worried whether she understood me at all. However, when I cast the parts in October for "*Charlotte's Web*—The Musical" I gave her the part of Fern, the little girl who initially saves Wilbur's life. By December, she had begun talking freely in class. Given the right avenue, this child came out of her shell. Like many children, she expressed herself best through drama. Later she was identified as gifted.

Through my successes last year with the production of this play, I have already begun planning for next year's project. My plan is to write and produce our own play using a book the class reads! Here is how.

Turning a book into a script

First, the children's book I am choosing to turn into a play is *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame. This book is one of the great classics of children's literature, and it is a fantasy. I think that fantasy literature is the best genre to use with children because of the infinite possibilities. I am also inspired to use fantasy because of my participation in Journey Through Fantasy Literature. In the institute I discovered classics, such as *Charlotte's Web; Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*; *The Hobbit*; *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*; *The Wind in the Willows* and many more, and saw how the wonderful themes of friendship, love, heroism, family, good and evil, life and death, and sacrifice can be touched upon and understood through reading the best books. I have been inspired to search for good fantasy books for my students to read, and I have seen the benefits—children who love to read!

The Wind in the Willows is full of descriptions of scenery, of characters' feelings, of events, etc. But a play does not describe in narrative; it conveys setting and emotions through stage directions to the director, set designers, sound engineers, and actors. Children need to understand the differences between a prose piece and a play, between narrative and dialogue before undertaking this project.

Students who find good fantasy books learn to love reading.

The Magic Pencil by Eve Shelnutt shows how to put students' ideas for converting a prose piece into a play. First, students are given copies of the section of the narrative to be converted and two highlighter markers. They are asked to highlight with one color all the parts that are narration, and highlight in the second color all the parts that are dialogue. When finished, they number each sentence (using the same numeral for the entire sentence) and then cut the different colored sections apart. After the pieces are in individual strips, the students are asked to arrange them in order with the narration on one side and the dialogue on the other. Example:

> 1. Jack was Timmy's new neighbor. Jack watched Timmy as Timmy stood by the moving van.
> 2. "Mom,"
> 2. said Jack;
> 2. "I'm going to meet the new boy next door, okay?"
> 3. Jack ran across the yard. (Shelnutt 54-55)

After the students have done this, they are ready to take the narration and turn it into stage directions and use the dialogue as spoken words for the actors.

Before the students begin to manipulate the actual piece themselves, I would give them an example of how it could be done. Below is a quote from Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*:

> The Mole had been working hard all the morning, spring-cleaning his little home. First with brooms, then with dusters; then on ladders and steps and chairs, with a brush and a pail of whitewash; till he had dust in his throat and eyes, and splashes of whitewash all over his black fur, and an aching back and weary arms. Spring was moving in the air above and in the earth below and around him, penetrating even his dark and lowly little house with its spirit of divine discontent and longing. It was small wonder, then, that he suddenly flung down his brush on the floor, and said "Bother!" and "Oh blow!" and also "Hang spring-cleaning!" and bolted out of the house without even waiting to put on his coat. (1)

Of all those descriptive words that Kenneth Grahame uses, these are the few that I would have in a script:

> (The play opens with Mole busy at work spring-cleaning his little home. He uses brooms, dusters, ladders, steps, chairs, and white-wash. He has dust in his throat and eyes and whitewash all over his black fur.)

MOLE: Oh, I smell the beautiful air of spring coming down into my house. (He flings down his brush on the floor.) Oh bother! O blow! Hang spring-cleaning! (Mole bolts out of his house without putting his coat on.)

In a play the audience does not have to be told what each character is wearing and what is going on around each character, because the actors and the set convey the meaning. But in prose if the author does not describe every little detail, then the meaning will be lost to the reader.

When converting prose to play form, one should use the dialogue present in the prose piece. Below is an example:

> "Hold up!" said an elderly rabbit at the gap. "Sixpence for the privilege of passing by the private road!" He was bowled over in an instant by the impatient and contemptuous Mole, who trotted along the side of the hedge chaffing the other rabbits as they peeped hurriedly from their holes to see what the row was about. "Onion sauce! Onion sauce!" he remarked jeeringly, and was gone before they could think of a thoroughly satisfactory reply. (2)

Below is how I would take the exact dialogue and transform it into the spoken words of the actor (stage direction included):

> ELDERLY RABBIT: Hold up! Sixpence for the privilege of passing by the private road (Mole passes him and the other rabbits right by, paying no attention).
>
> MOLE: Onion sauce! Onion sauce! (He hurries on his way.)

Changing the order of events or the way something happens, is all right to do, if necessary. (See Appendix B, page 116, for conversions of the first six pages of *The Wind in the Willows* from prose to play form.)

The kinds of changes one makes depends on the type of performance the group decides to do. Two possible media for performance are Readers Theatre and Production. Latrobe and Laughlin give a definition of Readers Theatre in their book *Readers Theatre for Young Adults*:

> Readers Theatre is a medium involving group reading of a literary script focusing on dialogue between two or more delineated characters who, through voice and bodily tension rather than movement, cause the audience to sense imaginatively characterization, setting, and action. Readers Theatre is particularly appropriate to the school setting. Young people sit while reading the lines, thus having the opportunity to concentrate on voice interpretation rather than the practice of action inherent in the presentation of a play. Because of the imaginative participational role of the audience, no character makeup, props, full costumes, scenery, and full-scale stage movement are needed. (3)

A full stage production of
Charlotte's Web

Production, the second way to perform a play, involves a full stage production, costuming, movement, etc. Everyone involved must be committed. When my second-grade class produced "*Charlotte's Web*—The Musical," it took eight months from start to finish. First the class read and studied the book by E. B. White. Then in October, the music teacher and I cast the parts for the play, and we started to rehearse right away. The class spent two weeks reading through the script to familiarize ourselves with the material. Then we began blocking (adding movement to the words). We spent five months on this, rehearsing three times a week for 30 minutes to an hour each time. The month before our performance we rehearsed the play section by section; the week before our performance, we rehearsed all day long doing "run throughs" (going from start to finish without stopping). Several parents designed and constructed the sets, props, and costumes.

Both Readers Theater and Production meet several of the Standards of Learning Objectives for the fourth grade:

4.2 The student will demonstrate effective listening skills. *Descriptive Statement:* This includes giving full attention to the speaker, hearing accurately, discerning the speaker's purpose, identifying main points, questioning for clarification, and responding appropriately.
4.8 The student will distinguish between fiction and nonfiction. *Descriptive Statement*: Emphasis is on the essential differences between these two forms, as well as the different purposes of each form.
4.9 The student will identify and describe the setting, characters, and plot in stories. *Descriptive Statement*: The student distinguishes these components and begins to understand how they contribute to the development of stories. (9)

(See Appendix A below for additional skills and concepts covered.)

I have discovered that creative dramatics works! Because of the intense study of children's fantasy literature at the NEH institute in 1991, I felt I had a good knowledge of content which could be used as framework to explore dramatics. The use of literary classics with dramatic interpretation meets the objectives set by the state and county. Most importantly, students love dramatics, and they seem to learn better with fewer frustrations than in traditional ways of teaching. Creative dramatics is an extension of a child's natural way of learning.

APPENDIX A

The following additional activites for using creative dramatics in language arts are taken from June Cottrell's book *Teaching with Creative Dramatics*, 177-79:

1. Moving as verbs. Children pantomime the action of the verb to reinforce meaning and understanding. This can be taken one step further by having the children distinguish between the active and passive verbs. They will act out the action if it is an active verb and freeze if it is a passive verb. If a child is caught acting out a passive verb when he should freeze, then he must come up with a sentence using a passive verb. The reverse should be done if a child freezes on an active verb when it should be acted out.

2. Spelling. The children can practice their spelling words by spelling the words in the air with their fingers, feet, legs, hands, elbows, etc. They can also form groups and each one

can make a letter with his body. When the group has spelled the word, then they freeze. Children may also pantomime words for a practice spelling test. One child picks a word from the list and acts it out while the rest of the class tries to figure out which word it is and spell it correctly on paper.

3. New vocabularly words or "living dictionary." The children are divided into three or four groups. Each group takes one of the vocabulary words (chosen from math, science, social studies, or reading) and looks it up in the dictionary. Then they put the word on the blackboard and act it out. The rest of the class is supposed to guess the meaning of the word. The "showing" group acknowledges the first group to guess the correct meaning.

4. Antonym and homonym games. The class is divided into groups of partners. The teacher gives each partner a word which has an antonym. The partner with the word tells the second partner the word. The second partner is then supposed to act out the word's antonym. If the second partner acts out the correct antonym, then it is his turn to share a word that has an antonym with the first partner.

The following skills and concepts taught through creative dramatics are taken directly from Eve Shelnutt's book, *The Magic Pencil* (58).

1. Using one piece of writing to produce writing in a different form
2. Stimulation of imagination within the restraints of a story which has been written
3. Techniques of organization
4. Difference between narration, dialogue, and stage directions
5. Benefits of a sustained writing activity
6. Visualization of scenes from a written text
7. Modification of writing to meet practical demand
8. Clarity of writing: the concept of audience

APPENDIX B

Chapter 1: "The River Bank"

Scene 1

Character Descriptions:
Mole: An animal weary of being underground. He wants to explore the world. He is a good listener and a good friend.
Water Rat: He is a superb boatman, so he thinks. He is also a good friend, but he is very set in his ways.

(The play opens with Mole busy at work spring-cleaning his little home. He uses brooms, dusters, ladders, steps, chairs, and even whitewash. He has dust in his throat and eyes and whitewash all over his black fur.)

MOLE: Oh, I smell the beautiful air of spring coming down into my house. (He flings down his brush on the floor.) Oh Bother! Oh Blow! Hang spring-cleaning!

(Mole bolts out of his house without putting his coat on. He is being called to come up into the world above. He scrapes and scratches, digging his way to the outside world.)

MOLE: Up we go! Up we go! (He mutters.) I made it! This is fine. This is better than whitewashing (The sun beats down on his fur.) It is a beautiful day. Just look what I have been missing! (He jumps on all four legs and begins exploring the joy of living without cleaning.) Cleaning is a bore! Oh, how I've longed to breathe the beautiful air and enjoy the beautiful sun. (He crosses the meadow until he comes to the hedge where an elderly rabbit appears with a group of younger rabbits.)

ELDERLY RABBIT: Hold up! Sixpence for the privilege of passing by the private road! (Mole passes him without a glance in his direction.)

MOLE: Onion sauce! Onion sauce! (He says as he goes by.)

RABBIT #1: How stupid you are.

RABBIT #2: Why did you just let him pass right by? (Rabbits #1 and #2 continue fussing until the light fades on them and focuses on Mole.)

(Mole is walking through the meadow, along the hedgerows, and across the copes. He is feeling happy about his adventure.)

MOLE: It is so jolly to be the only idle dog among all these busy citizens. (He continues to meander along.) After all, the best part of a holiday is perhaps not so much to be resting yourself, as to see all the other fellows busy working. (Mole comes to a river. He has never seen a river before and finds himself entranced by its rolling beauty.) What a sight! Listening to the river is like sitting by the side of a man who holds one spellbound by exciting stories. (Mole sits down on the grass to rest and looks across the river. A dark hole appears in the bank just above the water's edge. He spots an eye peering out and then a brown face with whiskers.) What is it I see over yonder? It's a Water Rat!

(The two animals approach one another, regarding each other cautiously.)

WATER RAT: Hullo, Mole!

MOLE: Hullo, Rat!

WATER RAT: Would you like to come over? (He points to his home on the water's edge.)

MOLE: (Very uncertain about the Water Rat's ability to safeguard his well-being.) Oh it's all very well to talk!

WATER RAT: (The Water Rat says nothing, but stoops and unfastens the rope. He steps into the little boat which Mole has not yet noticed. The boat is just the right size for the two animals. The Water Rat holds up his forepaw as the Mole steps down.) Lean on that (meaning his paw). Now then step lively.

MOLE: This has been a wonderful day! Do you know, I've never been in a boat before in all my life.

WATER RAT: What? Never been in a . . . you never . . . well, I . . . what have you been doing then?

MOLE: Is it so nice as all that? (He says this shyly, as he looks at the cushions, the oars, the rowlocks, and all the other fascinating fittings.)

WATER RAT: Nice? It's the **only** thing! Believe me, my young friend, there is **nothing**—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing . . . (He continues on dreamily repeating the word until he runs into the bank.) messing . . . about . . . in . . . boats; messing. . . .

MOLE: (The mole, seeing what is about to happen, points and yells.) Look ahead, Rat!

(It's too late. The boat hits the bank full tilt. Water Rat lies on his back at the bottom of the boat, his heels in the air—still rambling on.)

WATER RAT: . . . about in boats . . . or **with** boats. (He continues on with a chuckle.) In or out of 'em, it doesn't matter. Nothing seems really to matter, that's the charm of it. Whether you get away, or whether you don't; whether you arrive at your destination or whether you reach somewhere else, or whether you never get anywhere at all, you're always busy, and when you've done it there's always something else to do, and you can do it if you like, but you'd much better not. Look here! If you've really nothing else on hand this morning, supposing we drop down the river together, and have a long day of it?

MOLE: (The mole, very excited at the thought, agrees.) **What** a day I'm having! Let us start at once.

WATER RAT: Hold hard a minute, then. (He climbs off the boat and into his hole to get a wicker luncheon basket.) Shove that under your feet.

(They're off, down the river again.)

MOLE: What's inside it?

WATER RAT: There's cold chicken inside it, and cold tongue, cold ham, cold beef, pickled gherkins, salad, french rolls, cress sandwidges, potted meat, ginger beer, lemonade, soda water. . . .

MOLE: O stop, stop. This is too much!

WATER RAT: Do you really think so? (Seriously) It's only what I always take on these little excursions; and the other animals are always telling me that I'm a mean beast and cut it **very** fine! (The Mole, absorbed in the new life, never hears a word the Water Rat is saying.)

WATER RAT: I like your clothes awfully, old chap. I'm going to get a black velvet smoking suit myself someday, as soon as I can afford it.

MOLE: I beg your pardon. (He realizes he has been daydreaming.) You must think me very rude; but all this is so new to me. So—this—is—a—River!

WATER RAT: The River.

(I chose to stop here, but the script would continue in this manner.)

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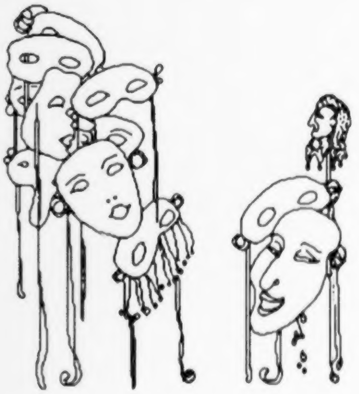


Third-Graders Use Fantasy Across the Curriculum

by

Margaret Dunlap Sparrow

In my third-grade class at New Prospect Elementary School I approached the study of fantasy literature in a variety of ways. I opened the year with a unit study of dragons. Students read many titles, but two of their favorites were *Dove Isabeau* by Jane Yolen and *The Reluctant Dragon* by Kenneth Grahame. Abbie Chapman and Amy Walls wrote these comments:

"*Dove Isabeau*, by Jane Yolen, is a story of a young girl named Dove Isabeau and her sweet white kitten. Dove's stepmother is jealous of her. The stepmother turns Dove into a flying dragon. When Kemp Owain saves her with three kisses, he turns to stone. Later the little white kitten licks the stone and the spell is broken. Dove and Kemp get married.

"This book makes me feel sorry for Dove. Her stepmother was so mean to her. I wish her stepmother could have listened to 'Don't Be Cruel to a Heart That's True' by Cheap Trick. Then I think she would learn to be kind and nice." *—by Abbie Chapman*

* * *

"*The Reluctant Dragon* liked to chew grass and tell stories. He didn't want to fight or hurt. He had shiny blue scales and wasn't fire-breathing. He was also lazy and nice. He was very friendly. He had a friend who was a little boy. He didn't like to exterminate people.

"In fairy tales, dragons are different. Fairy tale dragons are ferocious and fire-breathing. I don't like them because they exterminate." *—by Amy Walls*

* * *

Eddie Henderson chose to write a cinquain about a dragon:

DRAGON
Ferocious, jealous
Hunting, harming, killing
Scaley serpent
BEAST

Following the unit on dragons, I used *Charlotte's Web* to explore the smaller world of the barnyard. Students created pigs by sewing old stockings into cylinders and making embroidered faces. The soon-to-be pigs were fattened up with polyester stuffing, and decorated with lace, ribbons, and pipe cleaners.

Students also learned about spiders and webs. They studied the structure and sizes of spiders, their life cycles, feeding habits, and phobias people have about spiders. To explore the relationship between structure and function in nature, students worked in pairs to construct webs from yarn. When the webs were finished, they were tested for strength using a rolled ball of newspaper. Students wrote poems, cheers, jump-rope jingles, cinquains, and songs about *Charlotte's Web*.

Margaret received her bachelor's degree from Winthrop College and her master's degree from Clemson University. In May 1991, at the Whole Language International Conference in Windsor, Ontario, she made a presentation on using fantasy literature in the classroom.

Next, my class read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. They learned "The Narnia Hills" song from volume one of *Journey Through Fantasy Literature*, and decided to compose other songs to enter in the Fantasy Fair competition.

Another classroom activity was the creation of a newspaper *Narnia News*. Students wrote articles and drew illustrations for the publication. (See below)

The success of my class may be measured by the "Verses of Fantasy," a collection of songs which won first place in the Fantasy Fair competition. The following letter accompanied the submission of songs:

Dear Editor,

Here are our fantasy songs. I hope you like them. The stories we read are *Dove Isabeau, The Reluctant Dragon, Dragon Tales, Trouble With Dragons, Charlotte's Web, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, and *The Wind in the Willows*. We've written songs for each of these stories. Then we put our ideas together on the chalkboard. Sometimes we got stuck, but we didn't give up! Sometimes we fussed, but we finally agreed. We write our songs telling a short summary of the book. We work hard on everything we do.

Sincerely yours,

Daughters of Eve and Sons of Adam
Room 31

VERSES OF FANTASY

Dragons

(Sung to the tune of "My Favorite Things")

Scaly blue dragons are snarling and snapping
Searching for maidens is their favorite pleasure
They're clever and bold in hiding their gold
I don't want to meet one or visit his cave.

When they puff smoke,
When they breathe fire,
When they ramp* and snort,

I simply rely on my good friend St. George
And then I don't feel so scared.

*ramp: The circling of a dragon before he attacks.

The Ballad of the Monster's Ring

(Sung to the tune of "My Darling Clementine")

In an alley, it was empty.
Russell walked like Frankenstein.
Eddie jumped out of the shadows.
Poor old Russell had to scram.

Mr. Elives was like a wizard
And his voice was like dead leaves.
He said, "Russell, it's what you came for.
Come and take the magic ring."

First he turned it, nothing happened.
So he waited for a while.
In an instant, horns were sprouting
And his hair was everywhere.

Twice he turned it. Something happened.
Fangs were bursting out his mouth.
Poor old Russell really did it.
When he turned the ring around.

Thrice he turned it. There was fire.
He had done what no one dared.
From his shoulders came two bat wings
And he soared into the air.

Here comes Russell to the rescue.
He saw Eddie in distress.
Russell swooped down to the river
And he soared into the air.

In the moonlight, there was Russell
Thinking there was no way out,
But he found old Mr. Elives
And he turned the spell about.

Chorus
Poor old Russell, poor old Russell
Getting picked on all the time
Till he met with Mr. Elives
And he bought a magic ring.

Narnia

(Sung to the tune of "Winter Wonderland")

Lucy goes in the wardrobe.
By the coats, snow is glistening.
She stumbled upon the friendliest faun
Walking in the land of Narnia.

Near the lamppost Lucy
Saw Faun Tumnus.
And he wondered if she were a human.
He said, "Lucy, tell me where you came from."
She said from the wardrobe in the house.

Won't you come to my cave?
Don't be scared. Just be brave.
A daughter of Eve had better believe.
The prophecy is gonna come around.

Tell Me, Where is the Key?

(Sung to the tune of "Rocky Top")

Wish that I was in my motorcar,
Driving down the dusty road.
Can't you hear the "poop-poop" sound of it?
Here comes the mighty Toad.

All my friends think I'm a maniac.
Crashing into all I see.
Don't they know a Nascar Superstar?
Here comes clever old me.

Once I tried to give up motorcars.
Didn't want to land in jail.
But my heart said, "Keep your dream alive."
Mighty Toad will never fail.

Used to think I was a fearless Toad.
Raving over country and fields.
Now I am a changed and altered Toad,
Walking down the dusty road.

Chorus
Motorcar, you'll always be
Favorite thing to me.
Fast and powerful.
Tell me. Where is the key?
Tell me. Where is the key?

Jump-Rope Chants

Aslan, Aslan, turn around.
Aslan, Aslan, win the crown.
Aslan, Aslan's not in a zoo.
Aslan, Aslan, we love you.

Toady, Toady, you're so bad.
It's no wonder your friends get mad.
How many motorcars did you steal?

Templeton, Templeton, mean little rat.
What kind of food made you fat?
  Apples
  Barbecue
  Cotton Candy
  Doughnuts
  E—
  F—

Charlotte, Charlotte, dressed in grey
How many eggs did you lay?
1- 2- 3- 4-

Cheers

Lucy, Lucy, you're so kind
Don't let White Witch change your mind.
Lucy! Lucy!
Yeah, Lucy!

2- 4- 6- 8-
Who do we appreciate?
Aslan! Aslan!
Yeah! Aslan!

Give me an N - A - R - N - I - A
What's that spell?
  NARNIA!

White's her color. She has no other.
White Witch's her name. Ruling her game.
I say umph! She thinks she rules.
Umph! We know she won't
Oh, Witch, please!

White Witch, we hate you.
Here is what we plan to do.
Exterminate, terminate
  Suffocate
White Witch, don't be late!

Fifth-Grade Students Form A Puppet Show Club

by

DeAnn Setler

FANTASYLAND

Puppets "R" Us is a puppet show club consisting of seven fifth-grade students. Students in the club are Rich Adkins, Stanley Parsons, Amber Thaxton, Amber Tincher, Leah Stover, Jessica Eisenhard, and Doug Ford. These students write their own scripts and record their parts on a cassette tape. During performances students play the cassette tape and then are free to concentrate on working the puppets. This year students performed at the Boreman Elementary School talent show and for kindergarten through third-grade classes. Next year Puppets "R" Us plans to perform for community functions.

The Mixed Up Easter Bunny

by

Rich Adkins, Leah Stover, Stanley Parsons and Jessica Eisenhard

Narrator: One day the Easter Bunny walked into his workshop. Noticing that he had dropped an egg, he bent down to pick it up. He bumped his head on a shelf and was knocked unconscious.

Bunny: Ouch! Where am I?

Owl: Don't worry, son. You'll be all right in a little while.

Narrator: The owl helped the Easter Bunny to bed, and when he woke up he thought he was Santa Claus.

Bunny: Ho, ho, ho! Where's my red suit? Where are my elves? Where am I?

DeAnn has been the library media specialist at Boreman Elementary School in Charleston, West Virginia, for four years. She has a master's degree in secondary education. She was chosen to attend the NASA Workshop for elementary teachers at the Langley Research Center in Honyton, Virginia, in

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Narrator: So the Easter Bunny climbed out of bed and had an urge for cookies and milk.

Bunny: Hummm, let's see here. Why aren't there Christmas cookies? Where in the heck are my reindeer?

Owl: What's the matter?

Bunny: Oh, nothing.

Owl: Are you sure?

Bunny: Of course. Ho, ho, ho! Merry Christmas!

Narrator: The Easter Bunny heard the door bell ring, and a little girl walked in.

Girl: Easter Bunny! Easter Bunny! I love you! I have been a very good little girl this year. Speaking of presents, what are you going to bring me?

Bunny: I am going to bring you lots of neat stuff.

Girl: Okay. Bye.

Narrator: As the Easter Bunny was looking in the mirror, he noticed that he might not be Santa Claus, like he thought he was.

Bunny: What are these long ears doing here? And where is my beard?

Owl: That's what I've been trying to tell you. You're not Santa; you're the Easter Bunny! You were knocked unconscious, and you thought you were Santa. Now you'd better deliver those eggs to all those good little boys and girls.

Bunny: I'm on my way! Bye!

All: Happy Easter!

How Grandpa Saved Easter

Henry: Amber Tincher
Mr. Turtle: Amber Thaxton
Grandpa: Doug Ford
Narrator: Amber Thaxton

Henry: Hi, Grandpa! Whatcha doing, Grandpa? I came to hear a story, Grandpa!

Grandpa: Okay, sonny. Well, it all started when . . . I was just a young . . .

Henry: Hurry up, Grandpa! I want to hear the story, Grandpa.

Grandpa: If you keep interruptin', I won't finish it!

Henry: Okay, Grandpa, I'll be good.

Grandpa: Well then, BE QUIET.

Henry: Okay, Grandpa, I'll be quiet, Grandpa, okay!

Grandpa: It all started when I was eight and one-half years old. No one believed I could do anything. I ran into the Easter Bunny, and he was complaining about his leg.

Henry: What did he do to his leg, Grandpa? Huh? Huh?

Grandpa: He broke his leg. So I said, "Can I deliver the eggs for you?" And he said, "Okay."

Henry: Was it fun, Grandpa? Huh? Huh?

Grandpa: Yes, it was, sonny. The day I delivered the eggs I ran into Mr. Turtle, and he invited me to tea. I said, "Yes." After I had tea, the turtle asked me what I was doing in this neck of the woods. I said . . .

Henry: What did you say, Grandpa? Huh? Huh? What did you say?

Grandpa: If you would BE QUIET, I could tell you!

Henry: Oh, Grandpa, I'll listen, Grandpa.

Grandpa: Now back to my story . . .

Narrator: Grandpa thinks back to his old days, about him and the turtle.

Grandpa: Well, Mr. Turtle, I'm going to deliver these Easter eggs.

Turtle: Isn't that the Easter Bunny's job?

Grandpa: Yes, but he broke his leg, so I have to do it.

Turtle: I think that you are too little to handle a responsibility like that.

Grandpa: But the Easter Bunny told me to!

Turtle: Well, I hope you do a good job.

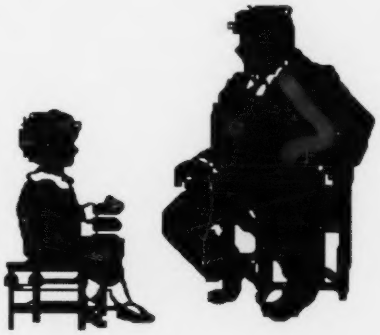
Grandpa: Okay, bye!

Henry: What happened next, Grandpa? Tell me, Grandpa!

Grandpa: Okay, I'll tell you. It all ended up okay, and I delivered all the eggs.

Henry: That was a great story, Grandpa! And I listened, too. Didn't I, Grandpa?

Grandpa: Good-bye, Henry!



Honky the Pig

by

Amber Thaxton and Amber Tincher

Narrator: This is about how Honky and the farmer became friends.

Farmer: I wish that pig Honky would get fat so I could sell him at the market.

Wife: Now don't get upset, George. He's just a little pig.

Farmer: I know, Doris, but I need the money.

Wife: Well, just feed him more.

Narrator: As Honky was passing back and forth, he ran into his friend Charissa the cow.

Cow: What's wrong, Honky?

Honky: I'm starving!

Cow: Then why don't you eat?

Honky: I would, but then the farmer would sell me at the market.

Cow: Oh . . . maybe I could help.

Honky: How?

Cow: Just do what I tell you.

Narrator: The cow's plan was to try to get the farmer and Honky to become friends. The cow told Honky to jump into the farmer's arms and lick him.

Farmer: Doris, do think I should sell Honky?

Wife: What do you think?

Farmer: We really need the money, but . . . well, Honky is my only friend other than you.

Wife: Then don't sell him.

Farmer: Okay.

Narrator: Now Honky is fat and he is scared!

Farmer: Honky, I've decided not to sell you.

Narrator: Here are Honky's thoughts: I love this dude!

The Mannerless Monkey

by

Leah Stover

Narrator: One fine day Mr. Mouse was taking a walk, when suddenly Melvin swooped down on Mr. Mouse! When Mr. Mouse finally recovered his head hurt badly.

Mouse: Oh, my head. What happened?

Melvin: I happened! Ha, ha, ha! I thought you would never wake up.

Narrator: So Mr. Mouse went home while Melvin continued to laugh about what he had done. Meanwhile, Mrs. Raccoon and Mrs. Cow were having tea. Suddenly, Melvin swooped down and landed on top of Mrs. Cow!

Cow: Well, I never in my life have been so angry!

Raccoon: Neither have I! I have never been so sore either.

Narrator: Well, Melvin kept on attacking people until they went to the wise old owl.

All: We want Melvin out! *(Chant three times)*

Owl: What is going on here? And who is Melvin?

Mouse: His name is Melvin Monkey. His little tricks have been driving us nuts.

Owl: I see, you want me to talk to this Melvin.

Cow: That is right. We all want you to talk to him as soon as possible.

Owl: Very well, I will talk to him tomorrow.

All: Yeah! Hurray for Owl!

Narrator: So the next day Owl went to see Melvin.

Melvin: Who are you? What do you want? It had better be important!

Owl: I am Mr. Owl. The animals asked me to talk to you about your behavior. As far as I am concerned I don't want to hear of any more trouble from you! *(Owl leans forward toward Melvin.)* Do you understand?

Melvin: *(Gulp)* Yes, sir.

Narrator: Melvin never bothered anyone again, and the animals lived happily ever after.

The moral of this story is always be polite and considerate.

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Fifth-Graders Focus On Fantasy

by

Ruth Ellen Kelley

The focus on fantasy began when I assigned reading homework over the Christmas holidays. Twelve students were given *Charlotte's Web*, and twelve were given *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Instructions were to read the book carefully and finish it before we returned in January.

When the students arrived on January 2, they were pleased to see posters about fantasy books on display, and a bulletin board with Toad's motorcar heading down a road toward several cutouts of books. To motivate the students, we created another bulletin board called "Fun Books To Read." Each time a student finished reading a fantasy book, he wrote the title and author on the cutout shape of an apple. Then he attached the apple to a large tree on the bulletin board. This display will remain up to greet new fifth-graders next fall.

I introduced the unit on fantasy literature by reading a poem I'd written (see chap. 3, p. 106), which invited students to join Lucy and Aslan in a car driven by Toad, and take a journey through fantasy literature.

Groups were formed to play daily comprehension games, Eye-Cue and the Numbers. Score was kept and competition was fierce. When the Lion group pulled ahead in points, a girl from the Charlotte group said, "I'm going to read my book again!" In this way, we managed to keep the score more or less even.

Crossword puzzles based on each fantasy book were eagerly worked. They were great cooperative learning tools, as well as comprehension builders. When the principal came to observe during the crossword session, a boy said, "This is fun!"

Creative writing exercises gave the students an opportunity to stretch their creative writing skills and to take the characters out of the classroom. Examples of poetry (including jump-rope jingles, cinquains, a rap, and a cheer) and book reviews follow:

Jump-rope Jingles

NARNIA

by Al Dingess

Aslan, Aslan, if you can,
Knock the cane from the Witch's hand.
How many times did he do it?
1-2-3-4-

Witch, Witch, in the snow,
How many people did she turn to stone?
1-2-3-4

ASLAN

by Natalie, Paige, Megan and Angela

Down in Narnia where white snow falls,
Aslan is the bravest of them all.
How many people did he rule?
1-2-3-4-

TOADS IN NARNIA

by Joey Hager and Yvonne Adkins

Down in Narnia where the indigo grows,
Naiads, Dryads walking on the roads.
Walking along till they see some toads.
How many toads do they see?
1-2-3-4-

CHARLOTTE and WILBUR

by Katie, Brandi, Christina, and Amanda

Charlotte, Charlotte, is it true?
You can do things I can't do?
Name the things you can do.
(jumper loses turn when he can no longer name things)

Wilbur, Wilbur, where's your web?
We don't see it over your head.
How many times did Wilbur try?
1-2-3-4-

CHARLOTTE

by Aaron Mitchell and Homer Christian

Charlotte, Charlotte
Jumps around
Spinning her web up and down.
When she sits down to take a rest
She always works on preparing her nest.
How many eggs will be in the nest?
1-2-3-4-

CHARLOTTE

by Paige Niday, Melissa Carson, Christy Salyers and Elizabeth Downs

Charlotte, Charlotte, turn around.
Templeton, Templeton, touch the ground.
Fern, Fern, tie your shoe.
Wilbur, Wilbur, the axe is after you!
(jumper runs out)

Roses are red.
Violets are blue.
Charlotte helped Wilbur and so can you.
How many words can you name to help him? (jumper must stop when he can no longer come up with a word)

Cinquains

EDMUND
Mean, cruel
Son of Adam
Lazy, selfish
BOY
—by Yvonne Adkins

LUCY
Curious, charming
Always there to help
First into Narnia
DAUGHTER OF EVE
—by Al Dingess

WHITE WITCH
Rules Land of Narnia
Mean, ruthless
QUEEN
—by Joey Hager

ASLAN
Savior, lover
Traded life for Edmund
Love, happiness, sadness
SON OF EMPEROR
—by Jason Smith

MR. TUMNUS
Kind and friendly
Tried to kidnap Lucy
Good, sad, peaceful
WITCH'S SERVANT
—by Jason Smith

WHITE WITCH
Mean and cruel
Half woman, half Jinn
Sad, cold, frightened
WHITE QUEEN
—by Jason Smith

Rap

The Narnia Rap

by
Nick Fry

Aslan, Aslan he's our man.
If he can't do it, no one can,

Aslan, Aslan, he's no fool.
He came to this land of Narnia to rule.

Aslan, Aslan, he knows how to rule.
He's sly and smart and that's the truth.

Edmund, Edmund, he may be mean.
He also made the Witch's face turn green.

Aslan, Aslan, king of the land.
Knocked the wand from the Witch's hand.

Lucy, Lucy, she's o.k.
With Mr. Tumnus she found her way.

Aslan, Aslan, when the Witch was gone.
Put the children on the throne.

Peter, Edmund, I'm their number one fan.
I know I'm bad cause I do the Aslan.

Cheer

Rah, Rah, Charlotte

by

Paige Niday, Melissa Carson, Christy Salyers, and Elizabeth Downs

Charlotte likes bugs and it's all right with me.
C-H-A-R-L-O-T-T-E
A true friend to Wilbur she will always be.
C-H-A-R-L-O-T-T-E

Book Reviews

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Hello. My name is Brian Arthur. The group I am in read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. The author of the book is C. S. Lewis. He wrote it for his goddaughter, Lucy.

One day, four children named Peter, Susan, Lucy, and Edmund were sent away from their home in London to the house of a professor because of the war and the air raids. Lucy was the first to enter Narnia through the wardrobe. Edmund was next, but he lied to the others about it. When finally all four children came into Narnia, they went to the Beaver's home where they learned of the prophecy and Aslan. As all of this happened, the evil magic of the inhuman White Witch grew weaker. For the first time, Narnia had Christmas. Edmund was taken prisoner by the Witch, Aslan had to die to save him, and Susan and Lucy witnessed his demise. The next morning the stone table cracked, and Aslan came back to life. With his help, the forces of good and evil did battle. Good prevailed and the children were crowned kings and queens in Narnia. They lived there and grew up. One day they followed a White Stag through the forest and found their way back to the wardrobe. What a surprise! They were still children!

Charlotte's Web

Hi! My name is Paige Niday. The group I am in read the book *Charlotte's Web*. The author of *Charlotte's Web* is E. B. White. Mr. White wrote the book because of the animals on his farm. His barn was the setting of this story.

The story is about a girl named Fern, a pig named Wilbur, and a spider named Charlotte.

Wilbur was born one spring night on Mr. Arabel's farm and was saved from the axe by Fern. Wilbur and Fern were best friends until Fern found someone else. Wilbur was so lonely. That is when Charlotte said she would be his friend, and she really was. At night, Templeton the rat would find great words for Charlotte to spin in her web. These words described Wilbur. Everyone was amazed and this is what made Wilbur famous. Everyone went to the fair, and Wilbur got to march in a parade, but he didn't win a prize—just a medal. When Charlotte died, she left a sac of eggs for Wilbur and he promised to raise her babies. All of them left except three, but Wilbur kept his promise to Charlotte and in this way, he was her friend.

Poem

Charlotte

by
Amanda Jordan

Charlotte spins words
in her web at night
That sparkle in the
morning light.
It surprised Mr. Zuckerman
that it was true.
Wouldn't it surprise you, too?

Activities

By accident, an extra eleven minutes in a period allowed me to invent a game on the spot, Character Dodge Ball. The children enjoyed playing it, and so we adapted it to other subjects. In Character Dodge Ball, a circle is formed and one person calls the name of a fantasy character as he bounces the ball in front of him. Then he selects another person in the circle to receive the ball, but before he bounces the ball a second time, he must call the name of a second fantasy character. Rules are that the name of a fantasy character can only be called once, and the ball must only bounce once, while it is in possession. If a person repeats a character's name, or lets the ball bounce more than once, he must go to the center of the circle. Then he has to dodge the ball as the game continues. If the ball hits him, he is out of the game.

For an art activity, the art teacher helped the students to create fantasy creatures which were perched on a soft wire hanging in the classroom. The movement of the air around the creatures caused them to sway on the wire. Each student was asked to write a brief descriptive paragraph about his creature and to present an oral report to the class.

As the fantasy unit drew to a close, we invited the parents to visit our classroom. Students were encouraged to explain their projects and talk about their favorite fantasy books. (Presentations by Brian and Paige on books they enjoyed are included on page 133.) Then I spoke briefly on the topic "Why Read Fantasy Literature?"

* * *

Ruth Ellen Kelley, a fifth-grade teacher at Kellogg Elementary School, Huntington, West Virginia, earned her degree at Marshall University. Because of her involvement in the 1990-91 fantasy institute and her success using children's fantasy books to encourage reading and thinking, she is teaching reading with classroom sets of books—no basal texts, workbooks or worksheets.

An Approach to *The Hobbit*

by

Jo Ann Hess

Near the end of the fantasy institute in July 1991, we were allowed to order classroom sets of books, and I chose to order copies of *The Hobbit*. I planned to use them with my fifth-grade classes the coming year. After school started, I began my introduction of *The Hobbit* by talking about J. R. R. Tolkien and some of his contemporaries. Then I passed out a copy of the book to each student. We read aloud the information on the front and back covers; then I read aloud the first three chapters, hoping to stir the curiosity of all fifth-graders and make them want to finish reading the book on their own.

Throughout the year as they read, we discussed the adventures of Bilbo and the dwarves. For comprehension and fun we worked crossword puzzles, wrote character sketches, songs, and poems. We used many activities found in Book Bits, a packet created for the institute by Flora Joy. We also saw the video version of *The Hobbit* which they enjoyed.

Each student wrote a poem about some aspect of the book. One of the poems, "Hobbit Characters," won first place in the fifth- and sixth-grade division at the Fantasy Fair.

Hobbit Characters

by

Christine Lester

Gandolf, Gandolf
One of the best,
Almost got captured
With the rest.

Bilbo, Bilbo
Dressed in yellow,
Was a quaint
Little fellow.

Thorin, Thorin
Had a key,
That unlocked a door
And a mystery.

Smaug, Smaug
Lived in the fog,
Breathing fire
That's his desire.

Kili, Fili,
Dressed in blue,
Won the gold
For me and you.

Gloin and Oin
Made their fires,
But never touched
A pair of pliers.

Balin and Dwalin
Played the viol,
For a while
Then walked a mile.

Dori, Nori, and Ori
Played the flute,
And wore their boots
While looking for the loot.

Bifur and Bofur
Were never loafers,
They were called
Gophers.

Bombur, Bombur
Could have been
Calmer so never
Be like Bombur.

Bilbo Baggins

by

Patricia Lester

When Bilbo went to steal,
He got caught and almost got killed.

Bilbo Baggins, he's quite a fellow,
He goes out in green and yellow.

He goes to Smaug in the middle of the night,
Not quite ready for a big fight.

Bilbo

by

Allen Skeens

Bilbo, Bilbo
Was ready to fight.
When he saw Smaug,
He had a big fright.

Bilbo's Weapons

by

Jennifer Workman

Sting the sword that Bilbo carried,
The enemies that it killed varied.

Bilbo in a cave acting brave,
He found this thing—it was a ring.

Bilbo sitting on the floor looked up
And found the secret door.

The black arrow went to kill Smaug
In the foggiest fog.

Can't Touch This

by

Lucas Belcher

Smaug lived in a bog in the creepy thick fog.
He had gold that he had to hold.

Out in the mist he held up the gold and said,
"Can't touch this."

"I've got the gold that you used to hold.
I'm keeping it in my pit
So you can't touch it."

Little Bear and Boone Visit Sixth-Graders

by

Earlene Misener

Imagine my delight as my sixth-grade class scurried to finish other assignments so they could sit on the floor and listen to *The Indian in the Cupboard*. Never before has a book stopped the physical momentum of active pre-teens so quickly **and** activated the mental and artistic gears of young readers as I've seen this one do! Even reluctant readers borrowed the book over weekends to reread the previous week's adventures. Just before my class finished the book, we held a drawing of students' names to choose three winners who could borrow three sets of the *Indian* trilogy from our classroom library during the Christmas holidays.

After we finished reading the book, I divided the class into groups of two to five students each. Each group was responsible for creating a project and making a class presentation about some part of *The Indian in the Cupboard*. One group built a log house in a seed tray; other groups made tepees or flannel board figures, which they used to tell a section of the story. One of my most reluctant readers used his skills to create a detailed replica of Omri's room inside a shoebox—complete with a ceiling electric light!

Other rewards from studying this book were harder to measure: students gained skills in getting along with their peers, parents interacted with their children, and I saw the high energy of learning in my classroom continue and spill over into many other areas. Would my class have been like this anyway? Maybe, but I think that having Little Bear and Boone around made a difference!

The models mentioned above and others were the focus of a fantasy display at the Greeneville Public Library during June 1991. The librarians there told me of the many children who pressed their noses up against the display-case glass to view the models, and then asked to check out fantasy books. The librarians thought the percentage of children's fantasy books that were read increased due to the models my sixth-graders had created of Omri's room, Little Bear's loghouse, Gollum's cave, and the Phantom's tollbooth.

◆

Earlene teaches the sixth grade at Greeneville Middle School in Greeneville, Tennessee. She is presently working on a master's degree in storytelling from East Tennessee State University.

Teaching Fantasy to the Eighth Grade

by
Cesily King

I hate book reports. I am tired of reading sections copied from the cover of the book, and if I read a conclusion saying, "I really liked this book very much," or "read this book to find out how it ends," just once more, I refuse to be responsible for my actions!

But reading books other than assigned reading is important. And getting the kids to interact among themselves and to react to their books is important, too. This past year I focused my gifted classes' extra reading on fantasy literature. Just before Spring vacation, we finished reading *The Hollow Hills* by Mary Stewart and *The Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula K. Le Guin. For their extra reading assignment, students were given the titles of twelve books and were instructed to choose one to read. I refused to let them call their assignment a "book report," because I didn't want them to fall under the mistaken impression that they could get off that easily!

The students were given a list of eight questions, along with the book list. Since some of the questions involved writing things down from the book, I suggested they keep the questions in front of them and look for things as they read. The questions could be answered briefly, which made them easy to grade, but still required their use of the literary terms we had previously discussed in class. The questions also required that the students think in different ways and on different levels. Several questions focused on the author's use of language, some on plot structure, and on making connections to other literature. Some questions required specific knowledge, some had open-ended answers, and others allowed any answer to be correct once the student explained it. Most of the students' papers were no more than one page, front and back. I also built in lots of extra credit. Full credit was given for completing the assignment, but students who exceeded requirements received grades of over 100 points—very helpful to otherwise low averages that grading period!

The questions:

1. Write a half-page summary of the book. (15 points) Points will be deducted for anything over the limit, but be sure to summarize the whole book!
2. Identify the main characters. Use either an annotated list or a "family tree" style picture of relationships. (15 points)
3. Copy two or three phrases, sentences, or paragraphs which demonstrate "neat" uses of language. Briefly explain why. (5 points for each example)
4. Find and copy five figures of speech (simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, alliteration, onomatopoeia) and identify each. (2 points for each example: 1 for copying a true figure of speech and 1 for correct identification)
5. What type of narrator is used (first, third, limited, omniscient)? Explain two or three ways, giving examples, of how the point of view and narration affected the book. (10 points: 5 points for correct identification; 5 points for each explanation of effect)
6. Write what you think one of the lessons from the book is. In a few sentences, explain how that theme is developed. (What did the author make happen in his book to show you he/she wanted you to learn that? (10 points)

7. Is this story a hero tale? Take each of the characteristics we have discussed and tell whether it fits. Show how or explain why not. (20 points: 2 for opinion, 2 each for correct explanation of characteristic)

Characteristics of a Hero Tale
(from *The Hero* by Lord Raglan)

- The hero is exiled as an adult; or as a child, someone attempts to kill him or keep him from his true place.
- The hero embodies ideal qualities (brave, strong, handsome, polite, skilled, artistic, etc.).
- The hero is helped by the gods or by unexpected sources in high, important places.
- The hero has a helper or sidekick.
- There is a riddle that must be solved or there is a prophecy to be fulfilled.
- The hero achieves his quest somewhere in his journey and then returns home.
- The hero makes a trip to the underworld while still alive and then returns (ritual death).
- Hubris, presumptuous pride, causes a downfall, either to the hero or to one of the other characters.
- The hero is either made immortal or "marries the princess and lives happily ever after," or due to his downfall, has a miserable old age.

8. List the motifs you found in this book. (2 points each; two examples get full credit) We have already discussed motifs in class in great detail by this time. Some motifs are: journey, enchanted sword, wicked stepmother, Cinderella, enchanted prince/princess, bequest, kindness to animals being rewarded, younger child achieving what older siblings couldn't, etc.

Extra Credit Assignments

This year I also added an option of an extra credit project for the students to complete after reading their spring break book. The student could get permission to do just about anything, but I offered the following possibilities:

- Write a ballad about a character or situation in your book.
- Design an ad campaign for your book. Include something that could be printed in a magazine, something that could be used on the radio, and a new book jacket (include front and back flaps).
- Design a tee-shirt about your book.
- Write an Ann Landers advice column, using problems at least five characters in the book might have. Include her answers.
- Make a clay statue of one of the characters or creatures in your book.
- Retell one of the situations from the point of view of another character.
- Continue the story in the book and write another chapter or adventure for the main character(s).

In the past I have created similar units or projects like this one for my students, but this year was the first time I chose to focus on fantasy literature. The quality of the literature which my students read was a definite asset. The students found the questions easier to answer since **all** books included more than what they were asked to find. Best of all, the students were able to take the rich, beautifully told stories and connect them to each of the other genres we had studied, and see that a top-notch storyteller weaves an intricate pattern of ideas and emotions that cut across time and space and reach into all of us.

Book List for Students

Alexander, Lloyd. *The Book of Three.* New York: Holt, 1964.

Cooper, Susan. *The Dark Is Rising.* Forge Village, MA: Holt, 1964.

LeGuin, Ursula K. *The Farthest Shore.* New York: Puffin, 1973.

—. *Tehanu.* New York: Atheneum, 1990.

—. *The Tombs of Atuan.* New York: Puffin, 1971.

L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time.* New York: Del, 1962.

Lewis, C. S. *The Silver Chair.* New York: Macmillan, 1953.

McCaffrey, Anne. *Dragonsong.* New York: Bantam, 1976.

Stewart, Mary. *The Crystal Cave.* New York: Morrow, 1970.

—. *The Last Enchantment.* New York: Morrow, 1979.

—. *The Wicked Day.* New York: Morrow, 1983.

Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.* New York: Bantam, 1985.

Marbleizing: An Artistic Fantasy

by
Rudolph Miller

Endpapers are the folded papers that are attached to the inside of the front and back covers of a hardbound book and thus help hold the book together. Some endpapers are illustrated or decorated with maps, photographs, sketches, or marbleizing.

History tells us that, as with many of the other important events in the graphic arts, marbleizing was first developed and practiced in Asia. Some historians credit marbleizing to the Persians in the middle of the sixteenth century; however, there is some evidence that the Chinese and Japanese may have produced marbleized and decorative papers as early as the seventh century. The important thing is that this rich and interesting art form has lasted through the ages and is still practiced today by professionals and amateurs.

One process for making these beautiful, decorative marbleized papers is often called the oil-and-water method. I selected this method for this essay because it is very simple and easy for the beginner to learn. You need to assemble the following materials and supplies: a pan about 9" x 12" and 4" deep, turpentine, printer's inks or artist's oil paints (red, yellow, green, blue, and purple are a good a set of start-up colors), five small cups or jars for mixing the colors, several very thin stirring sticks, an old comb or fork, and a collection of different kinds of paper of varying textures and colors.

To make your marbled papers, fill the pan with one or two inches of cold water. Next put a small amount of ink or paint in a cup, add a little less than half a teaspoon of turpentine, and stir till the turpentine and paint are well blended. For your first experimentation with marbleizing, I would suggest that you mix one cup of each color. When the colors are mixed, float a few drops of each color on the water in the tray. Use the comb, fork, or one of the stirring sticks to move the colors to form various patterns. From your collection of papers, select a sheet that you want to decorate, gently place it on the surface of the water, then slowly peel the paper from the surface. You will now have a beautiful, multicolored marbleized page. Try different color combinations of both paints and papers. You will be amazed at the variations that you will produce, not just in color but also in patterns created by the movement of the paints on the surface of the water.

If you experiment with color mixing, the beauty of marbleized papers is limited only to your own individual imagination and desire. This process can be used on materials other than paper, such as wood, glass, and cloth. In addition, marbling can be used to create many other projects like customized note paper, book covers, backgrounds for displaying poetry, and matting for pictures. Give this a try; both you and your students will find marbleizing to be fun and interesting.

Associate professor of education at East Tennessee State University, Rudy Miller holds a doctorate in education from the University of Pittsburg. He teaches courses in instructional design, media production and design, utilization of resources, and selection and evaluation of educational hardware and software.

Fantastic Fantasy:

A Reading Incentive Program for Wellford Elementary School

by
Pat Bridges

After the conclusion of Journey Through Fantasy Literature, I wanted to expose students at Wellford Elementary School to as many fantasy books as possible and to encourage them to read more. As a media specialist, I knew that fantasy was an appealing genre for all ages and levels of students; naturally, the program would be directed to kindergarten through fifth-grade classes. "Fantastic Fantasy" was cosponsored and funded by the PTA. Students read almost 200,000 minutes, and after seeing the results, many parents are asking when the next program will be.

Below are the guidelines, which I created for Wellford Elementary School students:

Objectives:

1. To encourage students to read, read, read.
2. To expose students to many pieces of fantasy literature.
3. To give students a framework within which they can set and reach goals.

Responsibilities of Program Participants:

1. Media specialist: to provide a bibliography of fantasy literature housed in the school, as well as a list of fantasy books available at most public libraries.
2. Classroom teachers: To help students choose a fantasy character to represent their class; to make a twelve-inch tall replica of the character and place it on the hall wall so as to represent a race between the characters; to total a student's reading time in minutes, and calculate the total minutes for the entire classroom; to invite the class to move their fantasy character one inch for every ten minutes their class reads.
3. Students: To read fantasy literature; to keep up with their "Bucks" and voucher sheets. (If lost, the student must start over.)

Goals:

1. Each student will read 100 minutes in seven days.
2. Eighty percent of the students in a class will read 100 minutes in seven days.
3. Ten classes will reach the eighty percent goal.
4. Fourteen classes will reach the eighty percent goal.

Incentives:

1. Each student will be given a bookmark which looks like paper money (a "BUCK"). Each time he reads ten minutes a hole will be punched in his "BUCK". When he gets ten punches he can buy a "100 reader button" and get another "BUCK". Two-hundred-minute readers will be given gift certificates from McDonald's.
2. Classes that reach the eighty percent goal will put their teachers on a fire truck. The teachers will put on full firemen equipment and ride on the back of the fire truck.
3. When ten classes reach the eighty percent goal, the media specialist will ride the fire truck with the other teachers.
4. When fourteen classes reach the eighty percent goal, the principal **and** media specialist will be "put on the roof" of the school building.
5. All classes in which all students read 100 minutes will "put their teachers on the roof."
6. The classes that have the highest total points will be given a special prize.

Rules:

1. Fantasy, and **only** fantasy literature may be read.
2. A student may read by himself or be read to by someone else.
3. An adult must sign a voucher sheet for each ten minutes of reading.
4. Reading may be done in or out of school.
5. Assigned reading by the teacher does not count.
6. Reading by the teacher to the whole class does not count.
7. Students who read in the bus-holding rooms before school get ten minutes credit and may get their "BUCK" punched by the teacher on duty.

Awards:

Awards will be announced from the roof.

◆

Pat Bridges has been the media specialist at Wellford Elementary in Duncan, South Carolina for eighteen years. She has a masters plus thirty hours and is a certified teacher of Junior Great Books. She enjoys storytelling and has served as summer storyteller for the Spartanburg County Library, visiting schools, as "Pat with the Story Hats."

Where Do We Go from Here?

by
Mary Manning

By this time all you participants in the 1990 fantasy institute are well into another year of introducing Alice and Wilbur and Toad and Lucy and Bilbo to yet another enthusiastic roomful of readers. But where can we go from the things we have enjoyed so much thus far? I wish to suggest to you three avenues of extension for this literature and for your classroom teaching.

I. In our introduction to fantasy literature in the institute, one definition proffered was that it is the creation of an individual author, based on the motifs of folk literature, the literature of the oral tradition:

- enchantments, deep sleeps, talking beasts
- transformations
- inanimate objects taking on life
- royalty: interrelationship among themselves or with the common people
- simpletons and sillies
- journeys, quests, tasks to be completed or problems to be solved
- magical powers
- wishes; and others.

The study of our chosen fantasy tales can be enhanced by identifying within them the motifs of folk literature and then tracing these motifs back to the old folk tales, noting similarities and differences, the creativity of the author of the fantasy stories, and the evidence of the oral tradition in the folk tales.

Depending on the level of the class, the study can be even further extended to the folk literature of a particular country—Irish, German, English, Scandinavian, East Indian, African, Oriental, or Native American—or to a particular motif as it appears in many different stories. Whatever culture you choose to investigate, its folk tales can lead to further exploration of the people, their beliefs, the geography of the country, the language, and many other aspects of their culture—all of which are reflected in their stories handed down orally long before our **fantasy** stories were created.

II. A second avenue for extending literature experiences beyond the modern fantasy tales you are introducing is poetry. Each of our five basic stories contains valuable opportunities to utilize poetry. The poems of Lewis Carroll ("Jabberwocky," "The Hunting of the Snark," "You Are Old, Father William," "The Walrus and the Carpenter," and "The Crocodile") continue the **nonsense** theme of the stories and can be enjoyed with the poetry of his friend and contemporary, Edward Lear ("The Owl and the Pussycat," "The Nonsense Alphabet," "The Jumblies," and "The Duck and the Kangaroo"), as well as that of Laura E. Richards, Ogden Nash, Gelett Burgess, Richard Armour, and Shel Silverstein, to name only a few. Many of these poets' works appear in picture-book format and single-author collections, making them very appealing and readable.

With *Charlotte's Web*, contemporary children's poets should be introduced, such as David McCord, Harry Behn, Karle Kuskin, Aileen Fisher, Eve Merriam, and Myra Cohn Livingston, as well as the earlier poets who pioneered in writing poetry explicitly for children: Robert Louis Stevenson, Dorothy Aldis, and Eugene Field, much of whose poetry seems ageless.

Mary Manning, assistant professor emeritus of English, retired from East Tennessee State University in 1985. She continues to lecture and to write essays, articles, and reviews, though she and her husband spend much of the year traveling.

When reading *The Wind in the Willows*, be sure to use Grahame's *The Reluctant Dragon*. Although not a poem itself, it can lead nicely into reading ballads and other narrative poetry (see below). Another kind of poetry that can be used well here would be animal poetry, like Blake's "The Tiger"; Gaztold's *Prayers from the Ark*; or the poems of T. S. Eliot and Randall Jarrell.

With the Narnia books, I would suggest A. A. Milne's two collections, *When We Were Very Young* and *Now We Are Six*. Not only do these books include all types of poetry and experiences common to all children, but they will show another aspect of Milne's creativity beyond the Pooh stories.

The poems in *The Hobbit* are themselves a springboard for a year's study of poetry because they include so many forms and types of verse and introduce so many poetic devices.

All teachers will have their own favorites to extend the poetic experience; these are only suggestions:

Nonsense:

"The Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee," by M. P. Meigs; "The Twins," by H. S. Leigh; or poems by Jack Prelutsky, John Ciardi, or William Jay Smith.

Narrative:

"The Pied Piper of Hamelin," by Robert Browning; "Little Orphant Annie," by James Whitcomb Riley; "Jonathan Bing," by B. C. Brown; or "The Duel," by Eugene Field.

History:

"The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers," by Felicia D. Hemans; "Paul Revere's Ride," by H. W. Longfellow; "The Oregon Trail," by Arthur Guiterman; or "Barbara Frietchie," by J. G. Whittier.

Mood:

"Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening," and other poems by Robert Frost and Carl Sandburg; "Boats Sail on the Rivers," and other poetry by Christina Rossetti.

Biographical:

A Book of Americans by the Benets has many sketches of historical figures; and Arthur Guiterman also wrote "Daniel Boone."

Emotional:

"The Little Elf," by J. K. Bangs; "The Seashell," by Amy Lowell; and poems by Langston Hughes, Nikki Giovanni, Gwendolyn Brooks, or James S. Tippett.

Rhythm, rhyme:

"Whispers," by Myra Cohn Livingston; "Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore," by W. B. Rands; "The Camel's Complaint," by Charles E. Carryl; "Choosing Shoes," by Ffrida Wolfe; "The Merry-Go-Round," by Dorothy Baruch; "Galoshes," by Rhoda Bacmeister; "Antonio," by Laura E. Richards and "Tragic Story," by W. M. Thackeray.

III. The listings above bring me to my third avenue for extending your teaching of literature: a poetry anthology. No doubt you have had your students compile booklets of their "favorite" poems. (Note of caution: be sure that they have been exposed to enough poetry by you or by former teachers to have "favorites," not just any old verse copied down to satisfy the assignment.)

But here I am not talking about your students' booklets, rather about *your own personal anthology*, a collection of poems for your teaching and yours alone—poems that fit your teaching style, your personality, your curriculum. The format is not the most important aspect of the anthology; its **immediacy** is. Your anthology should contain poems "captured" by you from many sources—old texts, newspapers, magazines, and even college classes, if appropriate—and pertaining to anything and everything you do in your classroom—holidays, weather, seasons, play, math, humor, science, thoughts-for-the-day, and even social studies.

Some teachers have called this their "shoebox" anthology, with the poems on file cards in a shoebox kept handy on the desk. Some primary teachers like to have their favorites on experience charts so that they can be better seen and read by the children. Myself, I kept my anthology in a loose-leaf notebook, arranged according to the topics I treated in my classes. Some will want to arrange their collection chronologically, with seasonal materials interfiled with curriculum topics. No matter how it is arranged or what format it takes, the advantage to such an anthology is that poetry will become an integral part of every class every day—not just an isolated unit in the language arts textbook—and children may see that poetry can be enjoyable, if you find it so.

Folk literature and poetry provide us with very natural extensions of the great literature we are bringing to our children in the presentation of fantasy stories. If particular titles mentioned above are not available in your libraries (consult both anthologies and collections by individual authors), many others equally appropriate and effective can be found with a little exploring of the contents of your books and libraries. Searching for these or similar poems will only heighten your appreciation of the deep well of poetry from which we can draw for our teaching and enjoyment.

❧

Folk Literature as Examples of Fantasy in Central Appalachia: An Annotated Bibliography

by
Judy P. Byers

"Stories At Evening"
(A suburban mother tells stories to her son)

"My great-great-grandpa Jethro walked
The wild savannahs deep in grass;
He saw the herds of buffalo
File westward through the mountain pass. . . .

"Listen, now, my son—
Stories at evening—wonders I have seen;
And, as we sit, look sharp and well remember—
Your son may hear the strangest tale of all:
How little rabbits hopped across our garden,
How grass grew by the wall,
And there, one night, when you were six or seven,
You heard a Bob White call." (3)

(From *Paradox Hill, from Appalachia to Lunar Shore* by Louise McNeil.
Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Library, 1972.)

Storytelling, imitating, singing, and playmaking about one's personal environment are natural ways to communicate, to develop, to learn. When a child goes to school, these primal teaching and learning activities of folklore should not stop, but continue as vital aspects of the school curriculum.

Traditionally, cultural anthropologists have agreed that culture is the totality of man's inheritance and life. Ralph Linton in *The Study of Man* concluded that, "Human beings owe their present preeminence partly to their superior mental equipment but even more to the ideas, habits and techniques which have come down to them from their ancestors" (69). It is also generally accepted among many social scientists that culture is not transmitted biologically but learned socially after birth, thus serving as one of the strongest motivators of learning (Battle 15). Man receives his first exposure to culture through his primary group: his family and localized, immediate inner and outer environment of home and community. This is his personal or folk culture, and the content is folklore.

Folklore is generally viewed as a composite of "folk" and "lore." The folk are the persons, the students, who learn, express, and bear the lore, which is personal and individual to their folk environments. Lore is collectively the materials of and from these environments described in terms of origin (man's private milieu of lineage, family, home, and community), form, function (the acceptance of folklore in the role of being not only man's first instructor but continuous teacher of life through his culture and analogous to it), and transmission (the oral and nonverbal delivery process).

A strong component of the folklore of any region (or environment) is its folk literature, the oral songs, tales, and verbal expressions. Folk literature has no authorships, but dwells in the oral tradition, being originated, transmitted, and often preserved by word of mouth from one grouping to another. It

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In 1990-91, Judy Byers served as mentor for the West Virginia cluster group. A native of Fairmont, West Virginia, she is well known regionally for her work as a folklorist, workshop director, English educator, consultant, and a storyteller. She is an associate professor of English at Fairmont University.

reflects the beliefs, attitudes, and language of the people. It becomes the first reflections of literature a child knows. Folk literature is also often a child's first exposure to fantasy. Containing magical details and believable characters, along with mystical settings and atmospheres, folk literature is the fountain out of which the fantastic elements in written literature spring.

Ironically, for all of its seminal importance to learning, very little folklore, especially regional folk literature, is used in primary and secondary school settings. Why? Alan Dundes, eminent American folklorist, has identified three main reasons that are verified throughout research and study:

> 1. Most elementary and secondary school teachers have not been exposed to formal academic training in folklore, and, except for occasional coverage in children's literature courses, the field of folkloristics, the serious study of folklore, is virtually unknown to these teachers.
>
> 2. Strangely enough, some selected bits of folklore are conventionally used in schools, but this folklore is typically of other people, e.g., ancient Greeks and Romans . . . but children often have difficulty in seeing much connection between their own lives and what happens to them as rather esoteric stories of a bygone age.
>
> 3. Professional folklorists have failed to make the results of their various researchers available to this group (teachers). Teachers who first encounter the field of folklore may become terribly excited by the material, but they invariably ask, "How can I use these materials in my classroom?" Professional folklorists have as a group, refused to answer this fundamental question, and, as a result, professional educators have had difficulty in translating folklore theory and method into a meaningful curriculum. (Simons viii)

As I thought about what enrichment to offer the West Virginia cluster teachers after their fabulous summer institute, I decided to share the primal fantasy literature found in their own Central Appalachia. My purpose was twofold: the teachers would become aware of the regional folk literature of West Virginia and sensitive to the pedagogical ways of translating this regional folklore (its content, theory, and method) into the educational process. During our two meetings, we analyzed a variety of West Virginia folk literature collections for not only their folkloric qualities but the extension of these qualities as elements of fantasy.

Listed below is an annotated bibliography selected from the sources and materials studied. It is arranged in folkloric categories:

A. Background Information about Central Appalachia

Brooks, Maurice. *The Appalachians*. Boston: Houghton, 1965.

Professor Brooks, a longtime naturalist at West Virginia University, presents a useful and delightful text along with beautiful drawings and photographs of the complex patterns of nature (its climate, topography, and cultural migrations) in one of American's major geographical regions. He reveals the Appalachians as among the oldest mountains on earth, reaching back more than 500 million years in time. The present chain, which stretches from the Gaspe in Canada down to Springer Mountain in Georgia and northern Alabama, were once higher than the Rockies, but weather and erosion have sculpted them into such vistas reaching from the White Mountain to the Alleghenies down to the Blue Ridge and Great Smokies. In Central Appalachia lies West Virginia, the heart of the region and the only state to be totally encompassed by the mountainous chain. Here the folklore, especially the folk literature, is perpetuated and preserved, as a comprehensive flavoring of the cultural heritage of the entire region.

Maurer, B. B., ed. *Mountain Heritage.* Parson, WV: McClain, 1977.

A most complete one-volume educational resource on the Appalachian cultural heritage of West Virginia. Written by a group of West Virginia cultural specialists, the twelve chapters cover man and the Appalachian wilderness, culture, arts and crafts, language, folklore and literature, family and home, music, religion, black culture, the mountain state, songs, and dances.

B. Folk Literature as Verbal Lore

Comstock, Jim. *Best of Hillbilly* (compiled and edited by Otto Whitaker). Anderson, SC: Drake House, 1968.

Jim Comstock is the longtime creator and editor of *The West Virginia Hillbilly*, a newspaper that showcases mountain wit, humor, language, and attitudes. This source has compiled some of the best selections from the newspaper, especially from Comstock's column "The Comstock Load."

Dent, James F. *James Dent Strikes Again.* Parsons, WV: McClain, 1984.

Another compilation of West Virginia wit and language as expressed by the newspaper writer and humorist, James Dent, who writes for the *Charleston Gazette.*

Gainer, Patrick W., ed. *Witches, Ghosts, and Signs.* Morgantown, WV: Seneca Books, 1975.

Dr. Gainer was an eminent folklorist and folk song scholar who taught these topics for many years at West Virginia University. This important source book and collection is a compilation of his lectures and research in Appalachian language patterns along with verbal lore as expressed in festival traits, weather signs, remedies and cures, beliefs and superstitions, plus other examples of nature lore.

Jones, Loyal, and Billy Edd Wheeler. *Laughter in Appalachia: A Festival of Southern Humor.* Little Rock, AR: August House, 1987.

A collection of wit and humor in verbal expression and short anecdotes, emphasizing the kinds found in Central Appalachia.

C. Folk Literature as Oral Poetry (folk songs)

Boette, Marie, ed. *Singa Hipsy Doodle: And Other Folk Songs of West Virginia.* Parsons, WV: McClain, 1971.

A large collection of many types of West Virginia folk songs with a major emphasis on selections for children.

Gainer, Patrick, ed. *Folk Songs from the West Virginia Hills.* Morgantown, WV: Seneca Books, 1975.

This annotated collection is the most complete source of West Virginia oral poetry in song and instrumentation. Dr. Gainer established folk festivals and directed The West Virginia Folklore Society for many years. This book is a major sampling of the people's songs that have survived through the oral tradition: ballads, songs of romance and unrequited love, play-party songs, nonsense rhymes, spirituals, and fiddle tunes. Dr. Gainer also collected over 100 variants of the Child Ballads.

D. Folk Literature as Prose (folk tales)

Brown, Stephen D., ed. *Haunted Houses of Harpers Ferry: Regional Ghost Stories.* Harpers Ferry, WV: Little, 1977.

An interesting collection of stories about poltergeists that often haunt historically significant houses and sites, especially during the Civil War years.

Jones, James Gay, ed. *Appalachian Ghost Stories and Other Tales (1975); Haunted Valley* (1979); and *A Wayfaring Sin-Eater* (1983). Parsons, WV: McClain.

Three collections of supernatural and preternatural tales gathered especially from the central part of West Virginia.

Montague, Margaret Prescott, ed. *Up Eel River.* New York: Macmillan, 1928.

This collection contains legendary tall tales about Tony Beaver, a strong hero in the lumber camps of West Virginia. Tony Beaver is the Paul Bunyan of Appalachia.

Musick, Ruth Ann, ed. *The Telltale Lilac Bush and Other West Virginia Ghost Tales* (1965) and *Coffin Hollow and Other Ghost Tales* (1976). Lexington: U P of Kentucky.

Both are collections of the various types of supernatural tales prevalent in the hills, complete with motif indexing and notes. They also highlight the coal mining, railroad, and farming occupations where the tales have been perpetuated.

Musick, Ruth Ann, ed. *The Green Hills of Magic, West Virginia Folk Tales from Europe*. Lexington: U P of Kentucky, 1970 (reprinted since 1989 with McClain Printing Company in Parsons, W.V.).

During the early 1900s the promise of employment in the great coal fields of northern West Virginia drew numerous immigrants from the poorer countries of Europe. Miners came to the state from Ireland and Spain, the Italian peninsula, the Balkans, Austria, Poland, Russia, and Turkey. They brought with them many of the tales and legends of their homelands, which were preserved among themselves and their children. From this rich and varied heritage, Dr. Musick has chosen 79 of the best and most representative tales for presentation in this volume.

Price, William B., ed. *Tales and Lores of the Mountaineers*. Parsons, WV: McClain, 1963.

This book tells legends of Indians and haunted houses, stories of the early Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, plus tales of the old inns, taverns, and the early moonshiners; in addition, there are chapters on superstitions, games and recipes.

E. Audio-Visual Resources

Lore of the Hills. Audiotapes. The Hill Lorists: Tallmansville, WV, 1988.

Seven audio cassette recordings feature selections of folk literature from West Virginia as presented in storytelling and singing. Tape 1 "Verbal Lore," Tape 2 "Bigger Than Real Life," Tape 3 "Mountain Humor," Tape 4 "The Ghostly: Supernatural Lore," Tape 5 "The Ghastly: Prenatural Lore," Tape 6 "As We've Heard It: Origins of the Folk Tale," Tape 7 "Sections." Tapes consist of selections from *The Green Hills of Magic* and are in print and available from The Hill Lorists, P. O. Box 8, Tallmansville, WV 26237.

WORKS CITED

Battle, Jean Allen. *Culture and Education for the Contemporary World.* Columbus, OH: Merrill, 1969.

Linton, Ralph. *The Study of Man.* New York: Appleton-Century, 1936.

Simons, Elizabeth Hadin. *Student Worlds, Student Words: Teaching Writing Through Folklore*. Portsmith, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1990.

IV

REFLECTIONS

If you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living. Wherever you are—if you are following your bliss, you are enjoying that refreshment, that life within you, all the time.

— Campbell, The Power of Myth

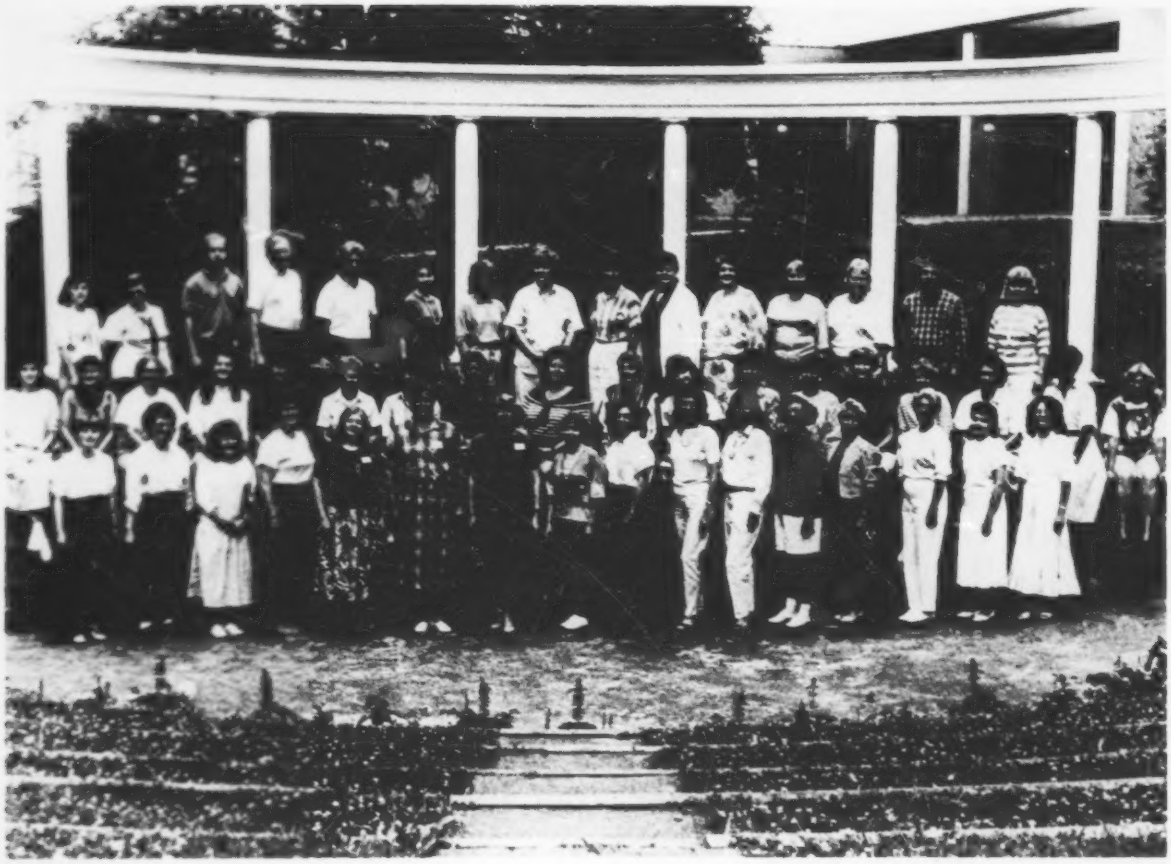
On the last morning of the institute, participants arranged the staff in a semicircle and "roasted" us with the class song—a ritual which signaled an end, but also a beginning and a time to reflect. Upon reflection, some participants emphasize the effect of the institute on their professional growth and their students. For example, Linda Nagy argues, "Give children books of their choice, allow them to become acquainted with the characters and stories in a quiet atmosphere, remove the pressures of skill sheets, detail and comprehension sheets, and you cannot fail to instill in them a love of reading." Nagy's principal, Delmer Blankenship, agrees: "These students actually enjoyed reading, and some of them for the first time." Because her students were so successful and generated so much community interest, volunteers are building Ben Creek Grade School its first library.

Other participants stress their personal growth. Earlene Misener's reflection is one commonly voiced among participants: "I came to this institute with a weary body and tired eyes from all the preparation I'd done. . . . I felt drained from the regular pressures as a school teacher." Misener goes on to say, however, that "cocooned from the regular world," she began to be "introspective, to grow," and that her life "will never be the same." Like Misener, Shelly Smith was initially overwhelmed with the "readings, lectures, tests, and group projects." Though it was "grueling and trying," she says, "I have never known such a reward, such a feeling of accomplishment and learning as when I completed the summer institute." Barbara Crabb comments that her "inward journey of the mind (and soul?) has continued beyond the closing day of the institute."

As we reflect, we must ultimately pose the question, "Was it all worth it?" The answer lies first within participants themselves and their students, but it can also be found in the more tangible products: art work and visual displays entered in the fantasy fair, the creative pieces included in this volume, the bookmark designs, the thank-you letters from Margaret Sparrow's third-grade class. Though the evidence is overwhelming, the real answer probably lies in the future. Ten years from now when Margaret Sparrow's 1991 third-graders are college freshmen, will they be reading? Will the Wharncliffe community in West Virginia continue to value its elementary school library? If the goals and objectives of the institute are valid, the answer is a resounding **yes**.

RTH

1990-91 Participants and Staff of Journey Through Fantasy Literature



First row: Roberta Herrin, Deborah Cole, Amy Teague, Ruth Ellen Kelley, Cesily King, Sharon Ordonez, Barbara Crabb, Jeannene Thompson, Judy Baird, Diane Foreman, Ann Woods, Sherry Smith, Melva Lynn Patton, Louella Sutphin, Deborah Gladkosky, DeAnn Setler;

Second row: Sharon James, Mary Southerland, Lynn Strickland, Louise Callahan Broadwater, Carolyn Donchatz, Shirley Saylor, Linda Mainland, Sheila Knaff, Paula Morrow, Robbin Sharpe Nuckolls, Mary Aldridge, Shelley Smith, Earlene Misener, Lu Cain, Libby Blackwell, Bonnie Pardue, Joan Gilbert, Margaret Dunlap Sparrow;

Third row: Linda Nagy, Jane Houser, Paul Wetzel, Winston Riddle, Charles Lindy, Karen Farmer-Wanamaker, Cheryl Lynn Plemmons, Edythe Green, Lisa Blankenship, Pat Bridges, Bonnie Farrar, Sarah Davis, Bonny Stanley, Jeff Gold, Jo Ann Hess.

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Class Song

by
Institute Participants

(Sung to the tune of "My Favorite Things")

Reading and writing and sleeping on plastic
Eight-thirty lectures become rather drastic
Alice and Gandalf with Charlotte and Toad
Come on with us, we can carry the load.

E. B. and C. S. and Carroll and Campbell
Followed their bliss where ever it rambled
Fairy tale BOOT CAMP, we'll ne'er be the same
Getting us out of here now is the game.

Chorus:
When the Toad drives
When the pig squeals
When our PANACHE goes FLAT,
We simply remember our time's nearly up
And then we don't feel so bad.

The Power of Myth is now a best-seller
If you don't get it, then Gold is your feller
Roberta can tell you about Hobbit's toasts,
But pigs are the things that she likes most.

Sarah and Mary and all the crew
Worked very hard to alter our view
Heroes, celebrities, Abelard, too—
All of the essays we LOVED to do.

Chorus:
When the Toad drives
When the pig squeals
When our PANACHE goes FLAT,
We simply remember our time's nearly up
And then we don't feel so bad.

Our journey through fantasy's truly a blast,
Although at times we fell on our ____
Now when the institute draws to an end
We're thoroughly versed in how to be friends.

Chorus:
When the chairs squeak
And the lights dim
And our checks are here
We simply remember the good times we've had
We'll see you again next year!

Fantasy Instills a Love for Reading

by
Linda Nagy

I grew up in a small coal mining town in Mingo County, West Virginia. The mountains surrounding us are very tall and old. Our community exists in a valley, and the mountain roads in and out are narrow and winding and mostly two lanes. These roads are treacherous to travel in the winter, making our isolation more acute. I often think that the people here are misunderstood by outsiders. We are very rich in our culture, and we treasure people and not things. Our ancestors were strong-willed to be able to live in this isolated area. That same determination and independence has been passed on to us, and we continue to overcome obstacles that isolation and poverty bring, still persevering. We are a community of families: everyone knows everyone else, and we can trace the generations back to family origins.

I still live in the house in which I grew up. Until 1990, I taught school at Cline Grade School, the same elementary school I attended as a child. Books were a precious commodity in my own family, and their worn pages and weak bindings testified to their use and value. Fantasy literature, especially, was a part of my childhood, and I treasure the memories of my mother, sitting in the creaking rocking chair in front of a crackling fire, while my sister, brother, and I listened to her soft voice reading adventure after adventure. I imagined I could see the faces of the storybook characters reflecting in shadows on the wall. We often begged her to read "just one more story" before she returned to her daily chores, and she always obliged.

As a teacher, I believe reading is the key to becoming a successful student, because children who **read by choice and for pleasure** can become all-around successful students. Yet, I often experienced pangs of failure when the school year ended, when I saw that only a few of my students were reading for pleasure. I had taught school for eleven years, but somehow, regardless of my numerous attempts, I could not instill the love of reading with my students. I could not awaken the students to the magic of foreign lands, tiny creatures, goblins, and talking animals that had captivated my attention when I was a child. What was I failing to do? Why couldn't I awaken them to the magic in books that had been sparked in me as a child?

The day I found the brochure describing the NEH Journey Through Fantasy Literature in my mailbox at school, I read and reread the information about the institute. I became intrigued by the institute goals, and I thought about them all day. I was reminded that the goals of the institute were my teaching goals, but ones I had failed to achieve with my students. Attending the institute would be an opportunity for me, so I decided to apply.

A few months later I received my acceptance letter and information about the reading assignments, and I began my journey through fantasy literature. I enjoyed reading all the selections, especially the children's fantasy books. The adult companion pieces were interesting, and I was surprised by the different myths about the origins of man, which Joseph Campbell spoke of in *The Power of Myth*.

The institute began in June, and immediately I was drawn into the lively classroom discussions with the various "master teachers," who aroused self-examination on issues of friendship, heroes, and so many other ideas concerning what actually motivates us to become who we are. The four-week schedule was both rigorous and fulfilling, and as the time passed, I began to

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Linda teaches fifth grade at Ben Creek Grade School in Wharncliffe, West Virginia. She is working on her master's degree at Marshall University. Her class won the grand prize at the Fantasy Fair.

realize why I had been unable to arouse the magic of fantasy literature with my students. The love of reading must come from within and be given to my students as a gift, not as an assignment. My role as a teacher must be to provide the opportunity and the time for the child to make friends with the characters in his book and to allow him to discuss his book openly. In other words, I must place a great deal of value on the time given to reading.

I was beginning to understand. When the fantasy institute ended in July, I could hardly wait for the school year to begin!

At Ben Creek Elementary School we do not have a library, so I needed to create a classroom library for the students. Thanks to the fantasy institute, I was able to select a number of wonderful fantasy books. These, along with other children's classics I had bought at a wholesale store, were placed on a table at the front of the room.

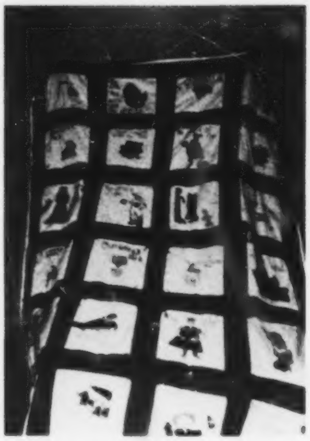
The first day of school I told my class I had a surprise for them. Smiles quickly spread over their faces. When I told them they would be allowed to choose a book from our classroom library and read from it daily for thirty minutes, the smiles faded, and they looked at each other as if I had played a cruel prank on them. Undaunted, I held up my copy of *Prince Caspian*, and announced that this was my choice for our reading time. Then I told them briefly of my journey through fantasy literature and my adventure in Tennessee. I could see a few sparks of interest light up in their faces.

Our reading took place every morning from 9:00 to 9:30, when I announced, "Let's visit our friends." I asked only one thing: "Enjoy your book." Skill builders, comprehension sheets, and traditional book reports were avoided. September turned to October and I could see a noticeable difference—they were beginning to enjoy reading and discussing their books. By November the long faces had disappeared, and the students were getting "into" fantasy. One morning, close to Christmas break, I announced, "finish your page," and one of my students—the one who had moaned and groaned the loudest in the beginning—begged for just ten more minutes. I could have jumped for joy! Sabrina's plea reminded me of myself so many years ago, begging my mother for "just one more story."

As the year progressed I saw tangible evidence that my students were becoming book lovers and readers. Steven and Chris asked me to locate other books by Robert Louis Stevenson; Renee wanted another book by Lewis Carroll; Sabrina wanted more Louisa M. Alcott books; and Tyler asked for adventure books. One parent told me that for the first time her daughter Miranda had asked for a set of books for Christmas. And Steven's mother said he'd asked for books to be placed in his Easter basket! How satisfying to know your students are reading for the mere pleasure of it!

One morning in early spring, I closed the reading time by saying, "Finish your page." Angie look up at me and said, "Mrs. Nagy, sometimes I feel like I'm very far away in my book and with the people in the story, and then I have to come back to the classroom." I knew exactly how Angie felt, because I remembered how wonderful those far away places were that I visited in my imagination while my mother read to me. Angie's remark showed me that I had perhaps created in my students the love of reading, and that is indeed the greatest accomplishment of my teaching career.

The school year was nearly at a close, but we were to end with a grand finale—a trip to the ETSU Fantasy Fair on May 9. Plans for the trip began



Our most prized entry was a fantasy quilt made by the entire class.

months before. To raise money to pay for the trip, we sold hot dogs and doughnuts, and chances on donated items. Mr. James Harless, a local businessman, heard about our efforts and offered to help us financially, and then a host of other well-meaning people added their support. All totaled we raised $1,800 dollars for the trip, which included an overnight stay and visit to historic Jonesborough.

The trip to Tennessee began at 2:00 a.m. with much laughter and excitement. For some of my students, this would be their first time to a "big city." Just as our chartered bus was taking us out of our mountains, I heard my students talking and laughing behind me. One remarked that we must be leaving the mountains because he wasn't being thrown so hard from side to side. The other answered, "Yes, Toto, we'll be in the Emerald City soon." I sank deeper into my seat, closed my eyes contentedly and smiled.

Six students entered the storytelling competition; all brought projects for the visual competition at the Fantasy Fair. Our biggest and most prized entry was a fantasy quilt made by the entire class. Before a student could choose a quilt block to design and sew, he or she had to read a fantasy book and create a quilt block to represent that book. We had quilt blocks reflecting the broad assortment of books read during the year: *Charlotte's Web*, *Tuck Everlasting*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Stuart Little*, *Robin Hood*, and *Wind in the Willows*. Making the quilt was quite challenging, and many had sore fingers for several days--but we have never enjoyed anything more.

Attending the Fantasy Fair was a memorable day! We enjoyed the balloons, juggler, magician, clowns, picnic, and sidewalk fair. We were impressed with meeting a **real** author, Jane Louise Curry, and many students purchased her books for autographing. When the time came for the Awards Ceremony, we were delighted to win ribbons in the storytelling and the visual categories. But our biggest thrill came when our class was awarded the Grand Prize for our "Fantasy Quilt." We cheered, we applauded, and we cried!

As I reflect over this past year, I have learned much. My students read for pleasure each morning. We avoided reading from the basal reading book, and truly enjoyed *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *The Wind in the Willows*. I had been indoctrinated to believe that when a student experiences a well-taught reading program, one that exposes him to numerous skills, he will develop a love of reading as a by-product of the program. **I found just the opposite to be true**. Give children books of their choice, allow them time to become acquainted with the characters and stories in a quiet atmosphere, remove the pressures of skill sheets, detail and comprehension sheets, and you cannot fail to instill in them a love of reading. My students learned, their comprehension increased and their reading skills improved. These things happened because my students were reading by choice, for the mere pleasure of reading!

Because of the success of my students, the support of parents and my principal, we have begun a new project for 1991-92. We are going to build a library in our school. Everyone is determined to pitch in and help. People in our community have offered to donate wooden boards and other materials to make bookshelves. Parent volunteers will train with the high school librarian to learn how to assist students in the library. Jane Louise Curry has donated several boxes of books and so have members of the English Department at ETSU.

The fantasy literature institute gave me ideas, knowledge, techniques, reasons, and the confidence to change my teaching approach to reading. I am a better teacher, and for all the years that I teach, the continued successes of my students will be the result of my Journey Through Fantasy Literature.

(Below is a portion of a letter written by Delmer Blankenship, principal of Ben Creek Grade School where Linda Nagy teaches.)

"In 1991 when Linda Nagy came to me with her plan for teaching reading to a select group of students, I found myself interested in this unique program she was going to incorporate in her classroom. As the year progressed, I monitored her class often as to witness the results of this endeavor. By the middle of October, I was sure she was really reaching those students. These students actually enjoyed reading, and some of them for the first time.

"She sings the praises of the institute often and loud. The other teachers are using some of the ideas she brought with her from the institute and with great success. I believe that through innovative programs such as Journey Through Fantasy Literature a noticeable improvement in the reading ability of students would be evident in **all** our schools. I encourage the promotion of these ideas to a broader number of teachers."

Sincerely,

Delmer Blankenship

Life-long Returns from the Fantasy Institute

by
Earlene Misener

Thoreau says that "it takes two to speak the truth, one to speak, and the other to listen." Therein lies the key to reaching the level of perfect friendship—listening. If you spend time talking to a lot of people on a surface but friendly level, you may have a lot of "friends" but where will they be if you need them? You have to open your heart to them. Campbell says that "the heart is the organ of opening up to somebody else." If you really care when you listen, look someone in his eyes when talking, and take the time to hear and respond to his thoughts, you will open yourself up to know the real inner person. If you expose your vulnerabilities to a friend, she will be touched by your gift of trust. Emerson said that "true friendship has two cornerstones, truth and tenderness."

The 1991 fantasy institute is an ideal example of this for me. I came to this institute with a weary body and tired eyes from all the preparation I'd done for this class. I felt drained from the regular pressures as a school teacher. The thoughts of putting any energy into new relationships left me cold. I planned to take good notes, learn a lot, get my grade, and go home. Instead, the friendly acceptance of fellow teachers and the thought-provoking lectures on life and bliss and friendship began to work their magic. My energy and enthusiasm returned, I **wanted** to invest in new people, and I have.

The four weeks at ETSU seemed like an isolated frame of time, and I felt cocooned from the regular world. I was allowed to be introspective, to grow, to care, and to open my heart to new friendships. I never dreamed I would rethink set patterns of religious beliefs and be better satisfied with the new ones. I never dreamed that I would be affirmed and enjoy and like myself in a less judgmental, more contented way. I never dreamed I would leave this institute **anxious** to put fantasy literature at my students' fingertips, **eager** to teach and work hard, and **happy** to nurture and to move toward perfect friendships with these new people.

Journey Through Fantasy Literature, which stands as a symbol for the professors, the readings, the essays, the dorm life, and the friends, has enriched my life so much that it will never be the same again. I leave here sadly, as parting with friends always is, but with the initiative to "niggle" these new thoughts and friendships because that's what life is all about. We are put here on earth for each other. I'm thankful I'm here.

A Fantastic Year

by

Shelly W. Smith

In the spring of 1990, I awaited the arrival of an extremely important letter, one that would either accept or reject my application to Journey Through Fantasy Literature. Luckily for me and for my students at Debusk Elementary School in Greeneville, Tennessee, I was chosen as one of the forty-five participants. Little did I know then that I was about to face one of the toughest challenges of my life.

Once I received my acceptance letter, my fantasy journey began with the arrival of a huge box of books. The assignment was to read and analyze the books before the beginning of the institute in June. I was overwhelmed with all of that work on top of my regular duties as a school teacher, a wife, and a Sunday School teacher. I struggled to finish the assignment, and the first day of the institute, I met forty-four other participants who had also been challenged by the task. Immediately, a bond formed between many of us, giving us an outlet to the pressure we felt.

I looked for relief, but what I found at the institute went much deeper than that. The four weeks that followed were filled with more readings, lectures, tests, and group projects. Everything we did was grueling and trying, but well worth the effort. **I have never known such a reward, such a feeling of accomplishment and learning as when I completed the summer institute**. And I am still reaping the benefits today in my personal and professional life!

The 1990-91 school year has been one of enjoyment and adventure for both my students and myself. We have explored and examined the experiences of *Charlotte's Web*, *The Hobbit*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIHM*, and *Tuck Everlasting*. I am amazed at how well the students participate, and how much they love these books. Some of the comments I have heard include: "I like being read to and just relaxing, even though I am in the sixth grade." Another revealing comment and one many students have made is, "I like the fantasy books, because I can get away from my problems for awhile."

The books have truly added spice to our classes, and I believe they have helped my sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students to grow and mature during these difficult developmental stages. Many times in classroom discussions during the institute, we saw how profoundly fantasy literature could instill morals and values in today's society.

Once again, I believe that using good fantasy literature is an extraordinary way to teach children. I am so grateful that I had the privilege to experience fantasy literature and to have the opportunity to pass it along to others!

* * *

A teacher of sixth- through eighth-grade language arts classes at DeBusk Elementary in Greeneville, Tennessee, Shelly earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Tusculum College.

Reflections . . . from West of the Mississippi

by

Barbara Crabb

I will be forever grateful that I was allowed to wrangle a position for myself as the solitary Delta educator among my Appalachian counterparts in the 1990 NEH summer institute Journey Through Fantasy Literature. My own inward journey of the mind (and soul?) has continued beyond the closing day of the institute. It is not an exaggeration to say that at least once a week I make some specific connection with something that I read, discussed, or considered as a direct result of attending the fantasy institute.

Fantasy was frequently part of my 1990-91 class agenda. Even before battle began in the gulf, my students were in a dither over the predicted earthquake along the New Madrid fault. (We live in a high-risk area.) Our reading of *The Hobbit* proved reassuring for all of us through the earthquake scare and even through the Gulf War. The story affirmed the ability of each of us to face those things which we fear. When we read Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* this year, I found myself realizing for the first time that it is fantasy that gives the story its mythical scope, that it is Ebenezer Scrooge's "spiritual" journey which makes this a story worth looking at again and again, generation after generation. During a short unit designed to prepare my students to see a production of *The Tempest* by the Arkansas Repertory Theatre, I realized how enrapt they were with the nonrational elements of the play; after seeing the play, it was obvious that those same fantasy elements had communicated many rational ideas. For example, the students were no longer so accepting of Prospero's enslavement of Caliban and Ariel.

Not only do I continue to read fantasy and to read about fantasy, often making the kinds of new connections with old favorites that I have mentioned, but I find myself becoming a "fantasy pusher" of sorts! In a workshop discussion I suggested that a twelfth-grade English teacher pair *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Othello* because both deal with the power of language to separate one person or group from another by labeling or distorting or confusing. Remembering Ursula LeGuin's argument that we need the mental play of fantasy to fully mature, I now try to guide my students who read solely nonfiction or realistic fiction to related fantasies. (All literature connects?) For gifted and talented education I hold that fantasy is a necessary element: Since fantasy does not accept the boundaries of "reality," it is a supreme example of divergent thinking, the "What if . . ." mode of thinking that brings about creation and invention.

The notion of moving from one place to another suggested by the institute title—Journey Through Fantasy Literature—has certainly been fulfilled in me. That I have been changed there is no doubt. I have come from being somewhat snobbish (but mostly ignorant) about the fantasy genre to being an avid fantasy fan. Fantasy gives us faith and hope. It crosses age, sex, and racial boundaries. Because its nonrational elements are grounded in the rational, physical world, fantasy demands full use of the brain—both its imaginative and logical capabilities. The reader or writer of fantasy is stretched to full potential. The study of fantasy literature has pushed me one step farther on my journey.

Barbara teaches seventh-grade language arts at Miller Junior High School in West Helena, Arkansas. Her master's degree in English is from Arkansas State University.

The Fantasy Fair

No matter what the weather, the fair must go on! And go on it did. On May 9, 1991, approximately 700 students and 150 adults descended on the D. P. Culp Center for a Fantasy Fair, despite black clouds and buckets of rain. What had been planned as an outdoor celebration of fantasy literature was quickly transformed into an indoor celebration. There may have been a few hundred damp second- and third-graders, but there were no dampened spirits.

Children toured the ballroom where displays were arranged on tables and walls—a fantasy quilt, a hobbit habitat terrarium, a replica of Willie Wonka's Chocolate Factory, a map of Treasure Island, a map of Toad Hall, posters, drawings, models of every sort. The winning designs from the bookmark competition had been produced and were distributed freely.

In addition to ballroom displays, the student performances and entertainment were popular. Competitions in storytelling, skits, and cheers were staged concurrently in separate rooms. Student videos, such as an interpretation of *A Wrinkle in Time* and a second-grade production of "*Charlotte's Web*, a Musical," attracted large audiences. Children were also entertained by storytellers Lucinda Flodin and Dennis Frederick, juggler Tommy Curtin, balloon artist and clown Kay Millsaps, magician Mike McPeak, caricaturists Jim Beller and T. J. Payne, a string band, a mime troupe, and a multitude of costumed characters from the pages of fantasy—Wilbur, Charlotte, the big bad wolf, a gnome, the Queen of Hearts, a mermaid, and Dorothy, *sans* her hot air balloon which was detained in Oz because of the rain. But with so much else going on, nobody seemed to miss a balloon—not even Dorothy.

No fair would be complete without cotton candy, popcorn, helium balloons, face painting—even a gypsy palm reader. Students stood in long lines before the darkened and tapestried interior of a Volkswagen bus and produced wet palms, hoping for glimpses into their futures.

There were more serious elements, too. A book sale featured fantasy classics as well as titles by Jane Curry—*The Shadow Dancers*, *Over the Sea's Edge*, *The Watchers*, and *The Wolves of Aam*. Curry mingled with the children and autographed books; she also delivered a formal lecture for the adult audience, "Of Quests and Fantasy," included in Chapter 1 of this volume.

After a day of celebration, the crowd gathered for the awards ceremony where Jane Curry presented the winners with ribbons and prizes. Though the monsoon raged outside, it was all blue skies inside the auditorium. Some children shrieked with joy; others cried. The Ben Creek Grade School group won the day—and our hearts—with their enthusiasm.

By late afternoon, the clouds had lifted and 700 children boarded school buses that would take them back to the realities of homework and lunch money. They retrieved all their displays, leaving the ballroom bare, except for a lost lunch box or jacket here and there, and the lingering satisfaction of having celebrated something excellent and momentous—in this case, fantasy literature.

RTH

Photographs
from
the
Fantasy Fair

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

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1991 WINNERS OF THE WRITTEN COMPETITION

GRAND PRIZE WINNERS

"How the Porcupine Got His Quills"
Jessica Faught
Williamsburg Independent
Williamsburg, Ky.

"The Hero"
Philip Lowe
McCracken Junior High School
Spartanburg, S.C.

POETRY

Grades 2 - 4

First: "Not So Good Friends"
April Akers
Elliston-Lafayette Elementary, Elliston, Va.
Second: "Charlotte"
Doug Archer
Fairmont Elementary, Johnson City, Tenn.
Third: "A Cinquain"
Laura Carper
Fairmont Elementary, Johnson City, Tenn.

Grades 5 and 6

First: "Hobbit Characters"
Christine Lester
Big Rock Elementary, Big Rock, Va.
Second: "The Blooming Tree"
Abi Murray
Boreman Elementary, Charleston, W.Va.
Third: "Robin Hood"
Sabrina Sparks
Ben Creek Grade School, Wharncliffe, W.Va.

Grades 7 and 8

First: "The Hero"
Philip Lowe
McCracken Junior High, Spartanburg, S.C.
Second: "The Hobbit"
Sharon Payne
DeBusk Elementary, Greeneville, Tenn.
Third: "Riddles"
Holly Dearstone
DeBusk Elementary, Greeneville, Tenn.

DRAMA

First: "'Ashtale': A Retelling of 'Cinderella'"
Jennifer King
Eastbrook Middle School, Dalton, Ga.

SHORT FICTION

(All winners are students of Bonnie Farrar at Williamsburg Independent, Williamsburg, Ky.)

First: "How the Porcupine Got His Quills"
Jessica Faught
Second: "Kay's Crisis"
Susan Etter
Third: "The Mystery of the Golden Locket"
Michelle Chapman

ESSAYS

First: "Fantasy Creatures of Narnia"
Fourth-Grade Reading Class
Fairmont Elementary, Johnson City, Tenn.
Second: "Coping in a Society Not of His Own Making"
Dylan Burnett
Eastbrook Middle School, Dalton, Ga.

SPECIAL CATEGORIES:

SONGS

First: "Verses of Fantasy"
Third-Grade Language Arts Class
New Prospect Elementary, Anderson, S.C.

INTERVIEWS WITH FANTASY CHARACTERS

(All winners are from Linda Nagy's fifth-grade class at Ben Creek Grade School, Wharncliffe, W.Va.)

First: "Interview with Charlotte"
Krista Donley
Second: "Interview with Toad"
Maranda Sue Gibson
Third: "Interview with Tom Sawyer"
Derek Dingess

Judges for the written competition were Ronald Giles, Isabel B. Stanley, Sharon James, R. Chesla Sharp, and Brenda Neal.

1991 WINNERS OF THE ORAL COMPETITION

GRAND PRIZE WINNER

"*Charlotte's Web* —A Musical"
Video Entry
Robbin Sharp Nuckolls' Second-Grade Class
Elliston-Lafayette Elementary
Elliston, Va.

STORYTELLING

First: Chris Noe
Ben Creek Grade, Wharncliffe, W.Va.
Second: Renee Simpkins
Ben Creek Grade, Wharncliffe, W.Va.

Third: Rachel Patrick
Williamsburg Independent
Williamsburg, Ky.

Honorable Mention: Joe Moore
Pond Gap Elementary, Knoxville, Tenn.

VIDEO

First: "*Charlotte's Web*—A Musical"
Second-Grade Class
Elliston-Lafayette Elementary, Elliston, Va.
Second: "Variety Video"
Fifth-Grade Class
Kellogg Elementary, Huntington, W.Va.

Third: "Rap With Puppets, MTV Rap, and Jeopardy Game Show"
Sixth-Grade Students
Boreman Elementary, Charleston, W.Va.

Honorable Mention: "Songs of Fantasy"
Third-Grade Class
New Prospect Elementary, Anderson, S.C.

SKITS

First: "An Unexpected Party"
Eighth-Grade Class
Gray Elementary, Gray, Tenn.
Second: "Poop, Poop, Poop"
Eighth-Grade Class
Gray Elementary, Gray, Tenn.

CHEERS

First: "Charlotte"
Fourth-Grade Class
Fairmont Elementary, Johnson City, Tenn.
Second: "Fern"
Fourth-Grade Class
Fairmont Elementary, Johnson City, Tenn.
Third: "Templeton"
Fourth-Grade Class
Fairmont Elementary, Johnson City, Tenn.

Judges for the oral competition were Ronald Giles, Isabel B. Stanley, Mary Manning, Anne Darden, Lynn Roe, Anna Allred, Scott Pleasant, and Jeffrey Gold.

1991 WINNERS OF THE VISUAL COMPETITION

GRAND PRIZE WINNER

"Fantasy Quilt"
Linda Nagy's Fifth-Grade Class
Ben Creek Grade School
Wharncliffe, W.Va.

DRAWINGS

First: *"Tuck Everlasting"*
Mike Miolen
Eastbrook Middle, Dalton, Ga.
Second: "Fantasy Fair"
Erin Miller
Williamsburg Independent
Williamsburg, Ky.
Third: "Goblin"
David Eggleston and A. C. LaDriere
Boreman Elementary, Charleston, W.Va.
Honorable Mention: "Narnia"
Miranda L. Gibson
Ben Creek Grade School
Wharncliffe, W.Va.

POSTERS

First: "Wall Quilt of *Charlotte's Web* Drawings"
Joan Gilbert's third grade
Travelers Rest Elementary
Travelers Rest, S.C.
Second: "A Map of Treasure Island"
David Breeding
Ben Creek Grade School
Wharncliffe, W.Va.
Third: "The Wizard of Oz"
Tina Sheppard
Ben Creek Grade School
Wharncliffe, W.Va.
Honorable Mention: "A Map of Toad Hall"
Maranda Sue Gibson
Ben Creek Grade School
Wharncliffe, W.Va.

MODELS

First: "The Hobbit Habitat—A Terrarium"
Edythe Green's eighth grade
Boiling Springs Junior High
Spartanburg, S.C.
Second: "The Hobbit Hole"
Rhonda Eggleston and Tia McClaskie
Boreman Elementary
Charleston, W.Va.
Third: "Willie Wonka's Chocolate Factory"
Derek Reese and Jessica Brown
Boreman Elementary
Charleston, W.Va.
Honorable Mention: "Robinson Crusoe's Island"
Joseph Colangelo
Ben Creek Grade School
Wharncliffe, W.Va.
Honorable Mention: "Robinson Crusoe's Island"
Brannon Adams
Ben Creek Grade School
Wharncliffe, W.Va.

SPECIAL CATEGORY

First: "Fantasy Quilt"
Linda Nagy's fifth grade
Ben Creek Grade School
Wharncliffe, W.Va.
Second: "Through the Wardrobe"
Mary Southerland's eighth grade
Gray Elementary, Gray, Tenn.
Third: "*Charlotte's Web* Game"
Samantha McKown
Boreman Elementary, Charleston, W.Va.

Honorable
Mention: "The Inchworm Who Wanted to Be a Pirate"
Joe Moore, III
Pond Gap Elementary, Knoxville, Tenn.

Honorable
Mention: "Sparrowhawk's Magic Tour"
Jason Clayton
McCracken Junior High, Spartanburg, S.C.

Honorable
Mention: "Puff Paint Dragon"
Margaret Sparrow's third grade
New Prospect Elementary, Anderson, S.C.

Honorable
Mention: "Bag-A-Book"
Joan Gilbert's third grade
Travelers Rest Elementary
Travelers Rest, S.C.

Judges for the visual competition were Mary Manning, Jeffrey Gold, and Ronald Giles.

Fantasy Fair at Boreman Elementary School

by
DeAnn Setler

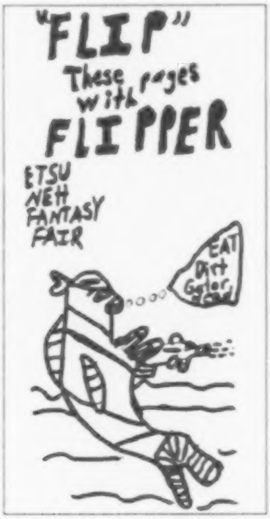
Students were encouraged to use creativity when preparing projects for the first Boreman Elementary School Fantasy Fair in Charleston, West Virginia. Projects were to be created using everyday materials, and students were not to spend a large amount of money on materials for their projects. The students were given plenty of time to come up with ideas and then were encouraged to discuss their projects with me for final approval.

The results were fantastic! I invited school board members, the public librarian, and the county reading specialist to judge the projects. All were impressed by the creativity of the students, and thought this was a great way to encourage students to read. Students received ribbons and fantasy literature badges. The local newspaper covered the event, and employees of the Kanawha County Schools videotaped rap songs and a game show that the students created. The winning projects competed at the Fantasy Fair held at East Tennessee State University on May 9, 1991. Students who won that competition, also received a photograph of their project. The students were excited by the projects and are already looking forward to participating next year.

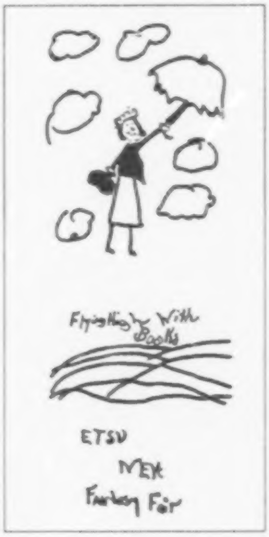
1991 WINNERS OF THE BOOKMARK DESIGN COMPETITION

FIRST PLACE
A Tie

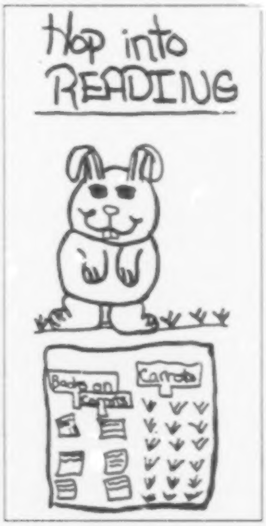
"Flip with Flipper"
Casey McClanahan
Big Rock Elementary, Big Rock, Va.


"FLIP" These pages with FLIPPER
ETSU NEH FANTASY FAIR
EAT Dirt Gator

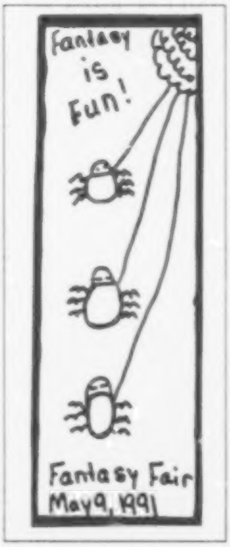
"Flying High with Books"
Amie Rasnake
Big Rock Elementary, Big Rock, Va.


Flying High With Books
ETSU
NEH
Fantasy Fair

Second: "Hop into Reading"
Heidi Goff
Boreman Elementary, Charleston, W.Va.

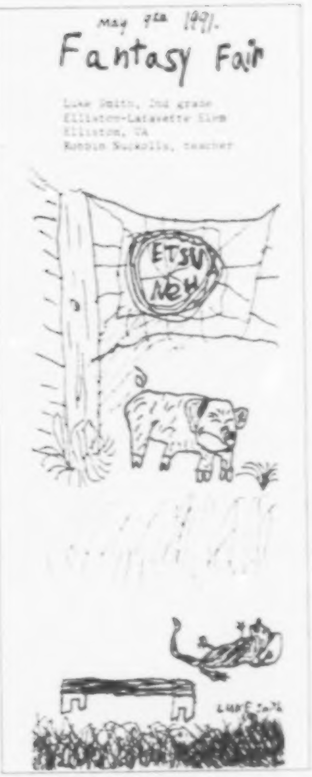

Hop into READING
Books on
Carrots

Third: "Fantasy Is Fun"
Melissa Carson
Kellogg Elementary, Huntington, W.Va.

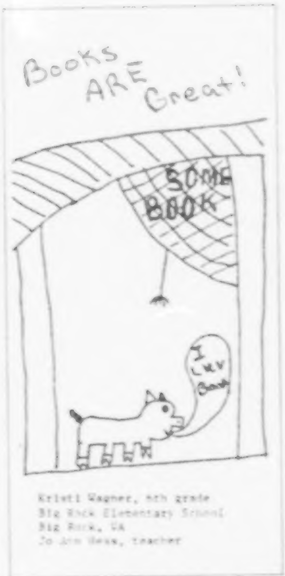

Fantasy is Fun!
Fantasy Fair
May 9, 1991

Judge for the bookmark competition at the Fantasy Fair was Marianne Gubler, who holds a master's degree in art education from East Tennessee State University. She teaches Artsploration— art classes in a museum setting for grades three through six. Recent articles by her appear in *Arts and Activities* and *School Arts*.

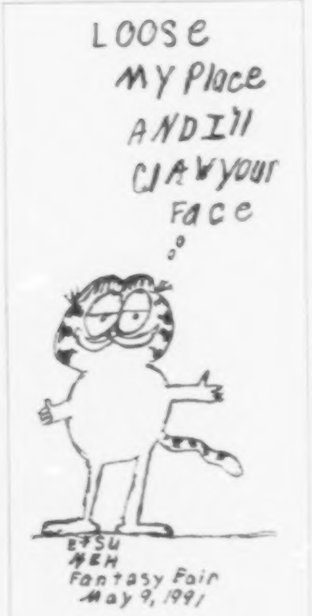
BOOKMARKS OF DISTINCTION


May 9th 1991.
Fantasy Fair
ETSU
NEH
LUKE SMITH

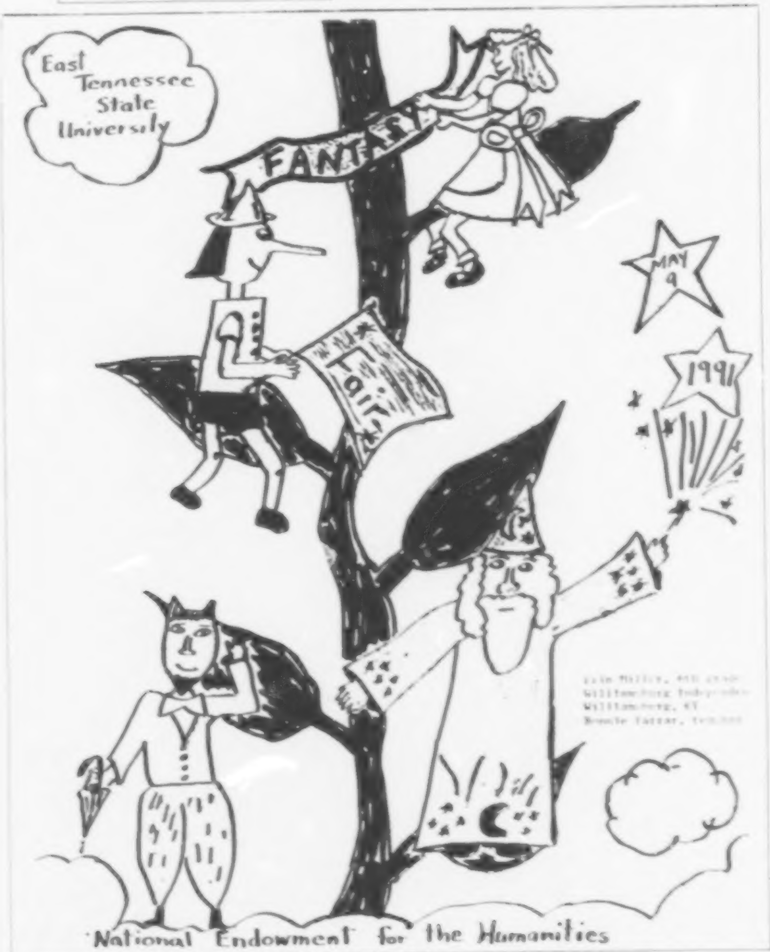
Luke Smith, 2nd grade
Elliston-Lafayette Elem
Elliston, VA
Robbin Nuckolls, teacher


Books ARE Great!
SOME BOOK
I LUV Book

Kristi Wagner, 4th grade
Big Rock Elementary School
Big Rock, VA
Jo Ann Hess, teacher


LOOSE MY Place AND I'll CLAW your Face
ETSU
NEH
Fantasy Fair
May 9, 1991

[illegible] Deal, 4th grade
Big Rock Elementary School
Big Rock, VA
Jo Ann Hess, teacher


East Tennessee State University
FANTASY
Fair
MAY 9
1991
National Endowment for the Humanities

[illegible] Miller, 4th grade
Williamsburg Independent
Williamsburg, KY
Bonnie Farrar, teacher

Dear Dr. Herrin . . .

Letters from Margaret Sparrow's Third-Grade Language Arts Class at New Prospect Elementary School

We would like to thank you for the ribbons. First place was a real surprise. We are very proud. We have been reading many fantasy books. My favorite fantasy was *Charlotte's Web*. It is about a pig named Wilbur, a girl named Fern, and an extraordinary spider named Charlotte. I like this book because it is interesting. My favorite part out of the whole book is when the mysterious writing appeared in the web. The most exciting part is when Wilbur's life is in danger. Charlotte was a very brave spider. She knew it, too. It's not all the time a good friend and a good writer comes along. Charlotte was both.

Sincerely, Tina Duncan

* * *

Thank you for the ribbons, and I would like to tell you about this book called *The Giving Tree*. We read other fantasy books, but this was my favorite. In this story, there's a young man who loves a tree. The tree gives him all she's got, and the tree turns into a stump. My favorite part was when the boy was little and used to climb the tree. It reminds me of my cousin because he likes to climb a certain tree.

Your friend, Jennifer Greenway

* * *

Thank you for the ribbons. I'm in Mrs. Sparrow's third-grade class. We are reading a book called *The BFG*. We have read nine books in this school year, going on ten. My favorite fantasy book was *Dragon Tales*. It's about some dragons that love princesses. They are called princess crunchers. An innkeeper tricks two princesses, and the other one kills the dragon. Read it for yourself.

Your friend, Lauren DeWeil

* * *

We are proud that we [won] the ribbons. I like *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. It reminds me of my birthday. It's near Halloween. My whole family used to dress up and play games. We did that every year until my granny had a heart attack. She didn't die, though. Thank you a lot for the ribbons. We appreciate it. Thank you again.

Your friend, Lindsay Smith

* * *

Thank you for the ribbon. We all want to see you. My favorite fantasy book [is] *Charlotte's Web*. My favorite [part] is where the animals talk. That is funny. The sad part is when Charlotte died and the funny [parts] were the animals singing. One more thing—Templeton. You [can't] leave him out, can you? You know he has to be in everything you do.

Your friend, Fallmah

* * *

Margaret teaches third grade at New Prospect Elementary School in Anderson, South Carolina. She earned a master's degree in elementary education from Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina.

Thank you for the ribbons. We worked hard to earn the ribbons. I am glad that we won first place for the songs.

We have been reading fantasy books. The fantasy book that I liked best was *The Frog Prince Continued.* What I liked best is the prince and princess didn't live happily ever after. At the end it made me feel happy because they both were frogs and lived happily ever after.

Your friend, Jenica D. Harrison

* * *

Thank you for our ribbons. We are proud of our work. We are enjoying fantasy books. My favorite fantasy book is *The Wind in the Willows.* I like the part where Toad gets put in jail. I like this book because it has funny things in it. I am glad we won the ribbons, because I feel very special. The funniest part was about Toad being a washerwoman.

Your friend, Sabrina

* * *

We are proud of our ribbons we got from the contest you and the other people gave. Thank you for the first place for our songs, third place for our dragon, and honorable mention for our tape. We have been reading fantasy books. My favorite one is *The Wind in the Willows.* It's about a toad who always gets in trouble and his friends always help him out. My favorite part is when Toad dressed up like a wash woman.

Sincerely, Amber Taylor

* * *

How are you? I am fine. I just want to thank you for the ribbons. I'm glad we won the ribbons. I can believe we won over seven states! We have been reading fantasy books. What is your favorite fantasy book? Mine is *Charlotte's Web.* My favorite characters are Wilbur, Goose, Templeton, and Charlotte. My favorite part is when Wilbur finds out he is going to live forever. It was so sad when Charlotte died. That is all I have to say. Bye! Write back soon.

Your friend, Allison Wood

* * *

Thank you for our awards. We worked really hard to win them. We also enjoyed reading fantasy books. My favorite one is *The Giving Tree* because I like boys and trees. But this wasn't any ordinary tree. This tree was loving and caring for the little boy. This book reminds me of *Charlotte's Web.* Charlotte cared very much for Wilbur just like the Giving Tree did.

Sincerely, Amanda Hudgens

* * *

I like the *Monster's Ring* because I like monster fantasy stories. The story was about a boy named Russell. He bought a ring that could change him into a monster. He saved Eddie when teenage boys were beating him up. He was a dragon at the time and he flew home. There was one problem. He couldn't get the ring off his finger, and the instructions were in the house, so he got Eddie to do it. The ring was causing him to get in trouble at school. I like this story because it is exciting and interesting. The *Monster's Ring* was the best story I've read.

Sincerely, Fyead Galloway

* * *

Thank you for the awards you gave us. We enjoyed reading fantasy books this year. My favorite fantasy book is *The Frog Prince Continued*. It is about a frog who let the princess kiss him, and he turned into a prince. But he was not happy. So one day he kept asking the witch to change him back to a frog. None of the witches would. Then he went home and kissed the princess. They both turned to frogs. They lived happily ever after.

Your friend, Lexie Banks

* * *

I am proud of my classmates and me. Our class read the book *The Wind in the Willows*. I like that story. I like Mr. Toad and Rat and Mole. I surely don't like Mr. Badger. He's mean to poor Toad. I don't [want] Toad to have a car though, because he will kill himself. He has too many wrecks, poor thing. I like this book because it's good. It has funny things in it. I love that book. I like the part where Toad [dresses up like] a washerwoman.

Your friend, Katie Wheeler

Dear Students,

One of the nicest things to happen last year was that following the Fantasy Fair, I received your individual, illustrated letters thanking me for the prize ribbons you won. Among the reams of junk mail and routine correspondence that come across my desk every day, your twenty-six letters were like Easter eggs and jewels hidden among straw.

First of all, let me say that all of us at East Tennessee State University were delighted that you attended the Fantasy Fair and that you won prizes for your songs, video and dragon. Several of you said you were proud for having won first place, and you **should** be. I agree with Sabrina: winning ribbons does make you feel very special. Joshua agrees, too. He says he likes awards: "especially first place ones." Many letters stated that you worked very hard. It showed! Lauren, did you really read ten books? I'm impressed!

Allison and Shea asked me what my favorite fantasy book is. Well, that's hard to say. I have so many favorites—many of the same ones you mentioned in your letters. For example, I never tire of reading *Charlotte's Web.* No matter how old I get, I will always love it. Like you, Tina, I cherish the last line of the book: "It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both." And like you, Matthew and Allison, I am always sad when Charlotte dies. I cry every time I read that line to my students—mainly because Charlotte dies alone. And I agree with Fallmah that "you can't leave out Templeton." She's exactly right. The book is both happy and sad.

Another favorite of mine is *The Wind in the Willows.* Like Chad, I think Toad is the funniest animal in the book. Jennifer and Sabrina and Amber and Katie all mention how silly Toad is when he dresses like a washer woman. He surely is! But my favorite part of the book is when Mole and Ratty search for and find little Portly Otter. Reading that chapter makes me feel secure. I know that if I am ever lost, my friends will search for me until they find me.

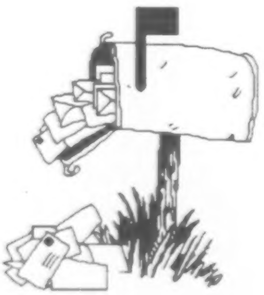
Other favorites are *The Hobbit*, *Tuck Everlasting* (books which you will certainly want to read in the fifth or sixth grade) and *The Velveteen Rabbit.* This book always reminds me of what's really important—love.

Reading your letters also introduced me to books I have not read—*The Frog Prince Continued* and *The Monster's Ring* and *Dragon Tales.* Who knows? These may become my favorites, too. Last year, one of my students introduced me to the fantasy of Diana Wynne Jones, and now I am enjoying her books about Christopher Chant. Every time I think I have found **the best fantasy book ever**, another wonderful one comes along. And that's why reading is so important to me. I keep meeting interesting characters in wonderful books—and interesting students such as you who read those books.

Amy and Fallmah, is the invitation to come and see you still good? If so, I just might drop in on you sometime, even though you're in the fourth grade now! I wonder what you are reading this year and whether **you** have met any new fantasy friends through books. Is there time to drop me another line?

Fondly,

Roberta T. Herrin



APPENDIX

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